

Customers savagely rail firms

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

PASSENGERS on many private train companies say they are suffering from a poor service, according to a government report released yesterday.

The study is a collection of surveys of customer attitudes conducted by the train companies since they were privatised. The results present a mixed picture. It shows that even the most highly-regarded train companies such as Chiltern Railways and Gatwick Express are failing to meet passenger satisfaction targets.

Cleanliness of trains, seat availability and station information are among the biggest complaints that passengers have, according to the statistics from the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (Opfr) - the body which sold off the railways.

On the Chiltern line, which runs between London Marylebone and Birmingham, passenger surveys showed the service had got worse in 14 out of 15 categories. Another surprise was the Gatwick Express service, which carries thousands of package holidaymakers each day. Despite being one of the few lines that makes money without subsidy, passengers were unhappy about speed of ticket purchases, seat availability, cleanliness and refreshments.

South West Trains, which runs trains from London

through Surrey and is owned by the transport company Stagecoach, was also criticised by its users for poor time-keeping and overcrowded carriages.

Commuters on a large London network, the French-owned Connex South Central, also berated the service for being overcrowded.

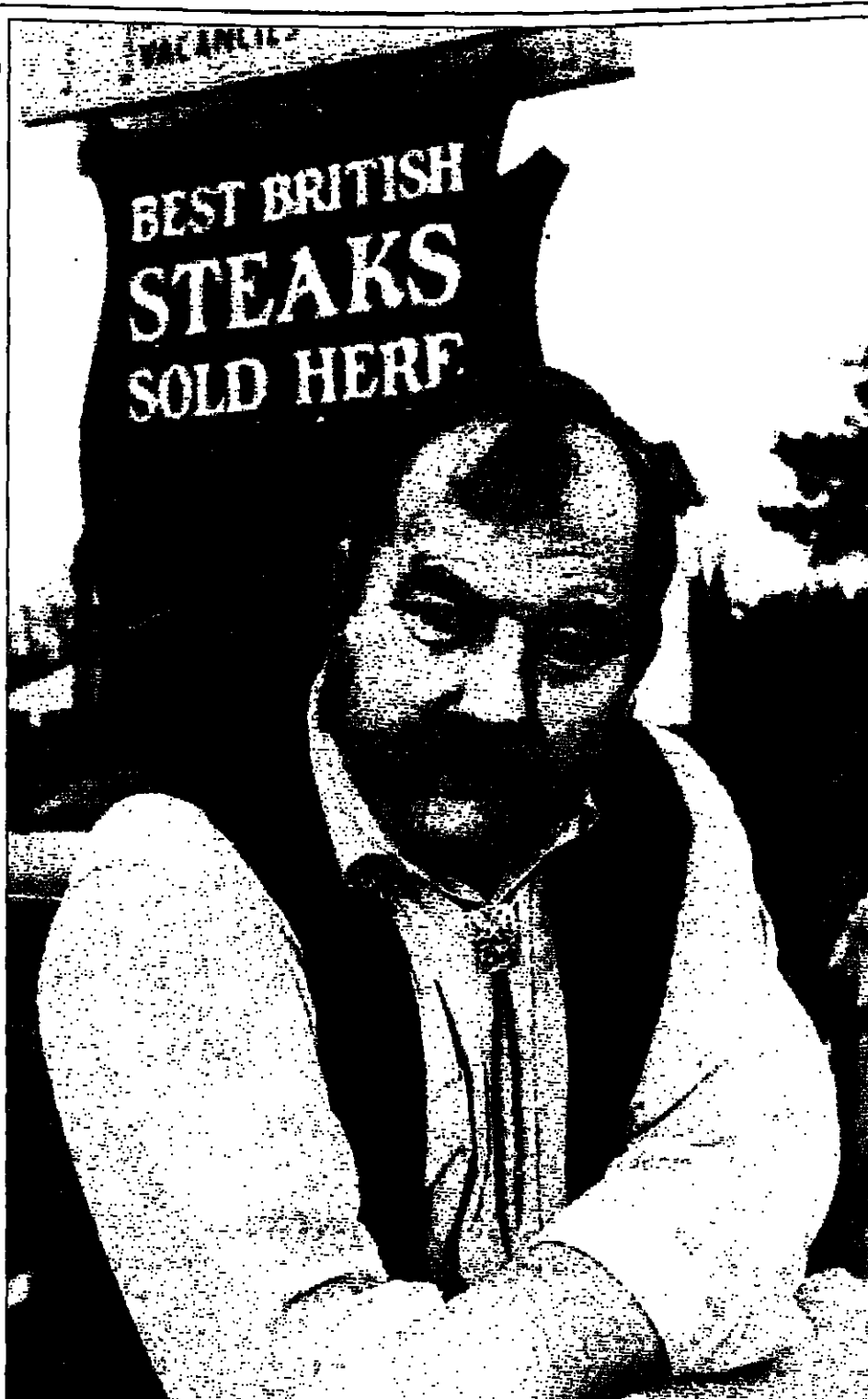
The Opfr figures, published for the first time, showed details of whether 19 of the 25 train operating companies had met their agreed benchmark figure for passenger satisfaction in a number of different areas of service.

Each company has different benchmarks and different survey times and no comparison with previous British Rail figures are possible.

This approach was criticised by rail campaigners. "We were hoping for league tables but the way the figures are collected allows for no meaningful comparison," said Jonathan Bray of Save Our Railways.

The passenger survey figures showed that 79 benchmark figures have improved and 58 have got worse. Of the 19 companies, 10 have generally improved, seven have got worse and two are roughly the same.

"This first publication of figures shows a mixed picture and it is too early to draw any firm conclusions," said John O'Brien, the franchising director. "However, it is encouraging to note that there are more results which are better than benchmark than are worse."



Close to the bone: Alan Coomber outside the Bell Inn yesterday which he runs in Iden, East Sussex, where the pub's specialty is T-bone steak, the landlord may become the first person to be prosecuted for defying the Government's ban on selling beef on the bone

Welsh land sale faces inquiry

By Tony Heath

FRAUD-SQUAD officers are investigating a deal involving the sale of land owned by the Welsh Development Agency to Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council. The investigation got under way as the Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, ordered the agency not to complete a contract, drawn up in February 1996, covering the sale of two sites on the western fringe of the town.

It throws doubt on plans to build a £35m store, leisure centre and swimming pool, offering the prospect of 800 jobs. Having purchased the land, the council intended to sell it to developers Highstar Developments (Merthyr), which invited bids from supermarket companies, with Sainsbury being selected. The developers later told the authority the Sainsbury bid was not the highest, leaving the council the prospect of finding an extra £1m towards the scheme. Alan Baynam, an independent member of the Labour-controlled authority, said yesterday: "The whole procedure was riddled with inaccuracies." Frustrated after failing to receive information from the authority, he took his case to the district auditor. "I came across a firm that had made a higher bid than Sainsbury's."

Mr Davies said: "It is not in the public interest to complete the contract until the matter has been fully considered and resolved." His department would co-operate fully with the police and the district auditor.

TOMORROW IN YOUR 5-SECTION INDEPENDENT

YOUR MONEY

How the top investors make their fortune

THE EYE

How do you want me?
Stand-up Dylan Moran
makes it to TV

THE MAGAZINE

Girl singers on top?
Hardly. It's the men who
are in control

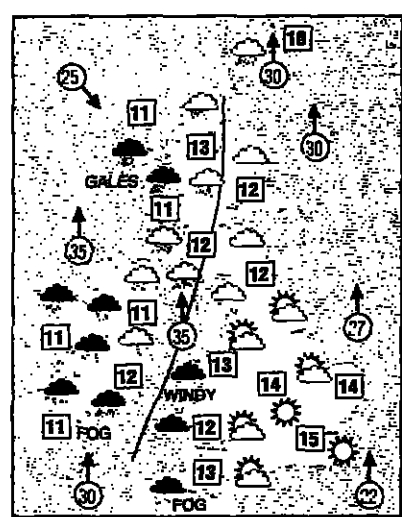
TIME OFF

Down Mexico way, Fitou
and chips? What to drink
with your dinner

Magnet kitchens

Our story on 18 February about an industrial dispute involving the Magnet kitchen company failed to include a response from management. The company argues that the total benefits package claimed by employees was worth 12 per cent, compared with the unions' estimate of 3 per cent. While only 60 per cent of the workforce was eventually offered a 3 per cent rise in basic wages, as stated in our article, the rest were offered improvements to other payments. Alan Bowkett, chief executive of Berisford, which owns Magnet, received a one-off productivity payment of £124,000 in 1997, not a pay increase of £125,000.

WEATHER



Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be windy with rain. The far north-east of Scotland will also become wet and windy, but most of eastern Scotland will see the rain arriving late in the day. Meanwhile, the western fifties of England and Wales will be on the cloudy and blustery side with rain late on, but east Wales and much of southern and eastern England will be exceptionally mild with plenty of hazy sunshine after early mist and low cloud have cleared.

Outlook for the next few days
Saturday will be cooler than recently with showers in many places and some snow for northern peaks. Sunday will see the best of the sunshine in the south, but the north and west will be showery. Monday and Tuesday will become windy again with gales in the north with the warming trend continuing. However, there will be rain in the north and drizzle at times in the west with the best of the sunshine in the south and east.

High tides

London	07.02	5.8	19.33	5.9
Liverpool	04.28	7.4	16.57	7.3
Avonmouth			12.10	10.0
Hull (Albert Dock)	11.50	7.1		
Greenock	05.49	2.7	17.57	2.8
Dun Laoghaire	05.31	3.3	18.19	3.3

Height measured in metres

Lighting-up times

Belfast	17.41	10	07.32
Birmingham	17.29	10	07.12
Bristol	17.34	10	07.13
Glasgow	17.32	10	07.29
London	17.24	10	07.03
Manchester	17.29	10	07.15
Newcastle	17.23	10	07.16

Sun & moon

Sun rises	07.05	Sun sets	17.24
Moon rises	01.48	Moon sets	11.10

New Moon February 25

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

World weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

Abuja	C 11.52	Chicago	M 4.39	Lima	C 22.81	Port Stanley	S 31.88
Algeria	F 11.63	Christiansburg	C 22.72	Ljubljana	C 17.03	Port Stanley	S 31.88
Algiers	C 11.52	Cologne	C 8.46	Lyon	C 11.52	Prague	F 11.52
Alexandria	C 17.83	Copenhagen	M 7.45	Los Angeles	S 17.62	Rangoon	S 27.58
Ankara	C 10.50	Cairo	C 18.69	London	C 14.41	Rangoon	S 27.58
Antananarivo	C 1.34	Cardiff	C 11.52	Madrid	C 15.59	Rangoon	S 27.58
Asmara	C 11.52	Dakar	C 22.90	Málaga	C 15.59	Rangoon	S 27.58
Auckland	C 23.73	Darwin	C 32.90	Manila	C 32.90	Rangoon	S 27.58
Bahia	C 28.89	Dhaka	C 28.89	Moscow	C 15.59	Rangoon	S 27.58
Bangkok	C 32.90	Faro	C 11.52	Mumbai	C 32.90	Rangoon	S 27.58
Barbados	C 30.89	Frankfurt	C 12.54	Nairobi	C 22.81	Rangoon	S 27.58
Batavia	C 14.57	Geneva	C 12.54	San Francisco	C 12.54	Rangoon	S 27.58
Belgrade	C 13.55	Havana	C 26.79	Singapore	C 34.93	Rangoon	S 27.58
Berlin	C 12.54	Harare	C 26.79	Stockholm	C 14.57	Rangoon	S 27.58
Bombay	C 32.90	Helsinki	C 12.54	Sydney	C 26.79	Rangoon	S 27.58
Buenos Aires	C 22.81	Hong Kong	C 26.79	Taipei	C 26.79	Rangoon	S 27.58
Burgas	C 22.81	Indianapolis	C 12.54	Tel Aviv	C 26.79	Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Jakarta	C 22.81	Tokyo	C 26.79	Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Jeddah	C 22.81	Yokohama	C 26.79	Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Johannesburg	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Jordan	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Kuala Lumpur	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Kyiv	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Lagos	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	London	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Los Angeles	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Lyons	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Madrid	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Manila	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Moscow	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Mumbai	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Nairobi	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	San Francisco	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Singapore	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Stockholm	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Sydney	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Taipei	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Tel Aviv	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Tokyo	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58
Bussan	C 22.81	Yokohama	C 22.81			Rangoon	S 27.58

MICHAEL HANLON WEATHER WISE

LAST WEEK, as I walked my dog in the park, another dog-walker came up to me, looked up at the blue sky with a pained expression and said: "Lovely weather... worrying, isn't it?"

A strange response to a sunny February day. Of course, what he meant was: "This warm weather - it must be the greenhouse effect. The end is nigh." The theory, and it is just that, of man-made carbon dioxide emissions causing global warming, first hit the headlines 10 years ago. It was no coincidence that the summer of 1988 was unusually hot across much of the United States. Britain experienced a very mild winter in 1988/89, and London sweltered in a heatwave the following August (most of the rest of the world had perfectly normal weather at this time; but then

few environmentalists live in the rest of the world). The Intergovernmental panel on climate change was formed. And, last year, legally binding agreements were signed in Kyoto, Japan, to "save the planet".

Anyone publicly questioning the greenhouse theory has largely been condemned as at best naïve, probably bonkers, and at worst a sinister right-wing agent, probably in the pay of the oil companies. Children are kept awake at night with tales of flood and catastrophe, and it can't be long before Greenhouse Denial becomes a criminal offence somewhere on the planet.

It is surprising, and instructive, to see how the global-warming paradigm became so widely accepted. Of course, an impending catastrophe is a much sexier story than business-as-usual. Environmental reporting is often carried out by advocates of environmentalism. In this climate, the party line trotted out by Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and a great number of scientists is reported faithfully and uncritically. The public's understanding of climatology is, quite understandably, rather sketchy. Many people are confused by global

warming, identifying it (if it is happening) as bad, but muddled about its causes. Reports often fail to distinguish between the greenhouse effect and ozone-layer degradation - two quite separate things. Most people have got the message that cars are the work of the Devil - and therefore will be happy to swallow any fuel-tax increases that obliging governments may wish to throw at them.

The scientists too, are happy to accept the research grants being put their way to investigate climate change, and produce wild worst-case scenarios that start from the as-yet-unproven assumption that temperatures will carry on rising.

But if the environmentalists have cried wolf, what will happen? If the climatological community is forced to revise or even completely overturn the current doomsday consensus, my guess is, that like those end-of-the-world cults that spring up from time to time, the true believers will not turn in anger on the high priests of environmentalism, but instead calmly pick up their sandwich boards and proclaim the next impending catastrophe. The Ice Age cometh?

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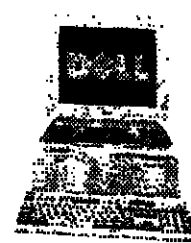
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Church turns to Diana to boost attendance

By Paul Routledge

THE Church of England is hoping to swell its Easter congregations by tapping into the public outpouring of grief after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

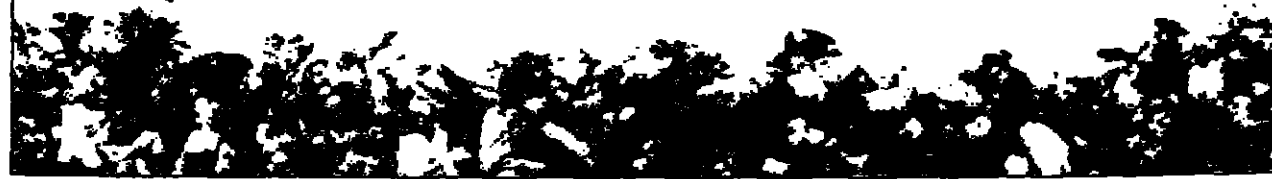
Posters depicting a pile of floral tributes, cuddly toys, hand-written messages and candles similar to scenes outside Kensington Palace following last September's tragedy will be displayed on billboards in the run-up to Easter. The slogan reads: "If this all started you thinking, carry on at Church this Easter."

This weekend 36,000 order forms for the campaign will be distributed to churches of all

denominations across the country. The campaign was devised by the Church's Advertising Network and is designed to awaken interest in those outside the Church. It is the Network's second Easteride advertisement. In 1995, posters exclaimed: "Surprise!" in reference to the resurrection. Last year a plan to use The X-Files logo with the slogan: "The Truth is out There" was thwarted by a copyright dispute.

The 1996 Christmas poster featuring the Virgin Mary with the words: "Bad Hair Day?!! You're a virgin, you've just given birth and now three kings have shown up" was generally deemed misguided. The Rev Robert Ellis, communications officer for Lichfield diocese

IF ALL THIS STARTED YOU THINKING, CARRY ON AT CHURCH THIS EASTER.



and a member of the Network, admitted that this Easter's campaign was "high risk" and could draw accusations that the

churches were "cashing in" on the Princess's death. The campaign echoes the desire expressed by the House of

Bishops last autumn for the Church to minister more successfully to the public's need for spiritual consolation after the

Princess's death. Mr Ellis said: "In recent years we have witnessed the collective outpouring of grief after events such as

The borrowed image: The Easter poster on the theme of Diana's death devised by the Church of England

Hillsborough, Zeebrugge, Kegworth and the death of the Princess of Wales. We wanted to harness that feeling, and, through this campaign, to point people towards the next step.

"Whenever there's a national disaster, the bank of flowers symbolises something that it's our job to meet. People have criticised the Church for not responding adequately to the emotions people felt after Diana's death. Here we are trying to respond to it positively by saying we can help.

"Another person's death reminds us of our own mortality. Quite often emotions hidden for

years come to the surface. We believe it's okay to be human - to cry, mourn or be angry - but we know we have some answers worth sharing."

He denied that the Church was exploiting Diana's death. The advertisement should be seen as a positive contribution because the Church was "trying to help people", he said, citing a survey of people's reactions to the poster, in which only 50 per cent immediately linked the picture with Diana's death.

"But advertising has to be in your face - you have to engage with it if it's going to work," he added.



Chris Evans: 'I'm going to sue you for that, I really am'

Quick on the draw sidekick puts Evans's nose out of joint

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

CHRIS Evans' cutting-edge sense of humour came close to tipping over the brink yesterday when his sidekick Will Macdonald accused him on air of smoking cannabis.

After much effort and an advertising break the owner of Virgin Radio managed to laugh off the remark as a joke, but there was no hiding the seriousness of his tone when Mr Macdonald - known as "Weel" to viewers of Evans' *TFI Friday* - made the accusation.

The ginger-haired presenter, who has made no secret of his fondness for the odd pint or six, was discussing what legalising cannabis would do to Britain - in his analysis it would grind to a halt because no one would be able to leave their chairs. His producer then said: "To my knowledge, you smoke nine or 10 joints a day, don't you?"

This Evans did not take well, replying: "Well I don't know about your knowledge Will, but to my knowledge not at all."

Unlike the usual banter that characterises Mr Evans' breakfast show, the exchanges between the DJ and his employee took an increasingly aggressive turn with Macdonald repeating the accusation: "Chris

Evans smokes drugs, lots of them" and Evans becoming deadly serious: "No I don't. I'm going to sue you for that, I really am, I'm going to take you to court and I'm going to sue you for every penny and your fat, because I don't smoke lots and I don't have nine joints a day at all."

Listeners could only wonder where this exchange was going when it was interrupted by a traffic report. It would appear that some unheard agreement was then reached that would let the head of Britain's latest media empire get out of an increasingly fractious battle of wits.

Once they returned to the fray, Evans' underling ratcheted up the conversation to a ridiculous level, accusing his boss of having sex with rabbits. Evans was not placated and said he had things he could air about Macdonald which he wouldn't so he could not be counter-sued. Then Evans asked his friend the footballer Paul Gascoigne to call in and deny he took drugs and Evans' employee Danny Baker to say cannabis wasn't his drug of choice - cocaine was.

Macdonald met Evans on *The Big Breakfast* and was Evans' first employee and the man who devised *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush*. Presumably with a track record like that he can say almost anything he likes.



Will Macdonald: Tested his employer's sense of humour to the limit

Amnesty International takes up case of men in sex sessions

By Kathy Marks

SEVEN men who are to be sentenced at Bolton Crown Court today for taking part in group sex sessions in a private home will be adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International if they are jailed.

Amnesty's highly unusual step reflects international outrage about the case of the so-called Bolton Seven. The human rights organisation rarely adopts prisoners-of-conscience in this country, and there are none in British jails at present.

The men were convicted last month of offences including buggery and gross indecency after police seized video tapes on which they had recorded themselves. Sex between men is illegal if more than two people are present.

The parties took place at the home of one of the defendants, Norman Williams. All the men were over the age of consent, except one, who was six months short of 18. All, including the youngest, were willing participants.

The Bolton case has become a cause célèbre in the gay community, and the men have received more than 400 letters of support from individuals and human rights groups around the world, including Australia, South Africa and Romania.

An Early Day Motion has been tabled by the Liberal Democrat MP Dr Evan Harris, who asked the Attorney-General a question in the Commons yesterday about issues relating to the case.

The Bishop of Edinburgh, the Most Rev Richard Holloway, is among eminent figures

who have written to the judge, Michael Lever QC, urging him to "dispense justice with mercy".

The offences carry prison sentences of up to five years, and the judge has warned that he is inclined to jail at least some of the seven. Williams, 33, and Terry Connell, 55, are regarded as most vulnerable because they were filmed with the 17-year-old, who cannot be named.

However, campaigners point out that the higher age of consent for gay sex has already been declared a breach of human rights by the European Commission, and that Westminster will almost certainly vote to lower it to 16 later this year.

The 17-year-old, who has been convicted of gross indecency despite his legal status as a minor, has submitted a statement to be used in mitigation today. In it, he says: "No one se-

duced me or pressed me to do anything against my will. I hope the judge will recognise that our relationships were harmless."

Sources close to the case say that police originally raided Williams' house in the mistaken belief that he was part of a paedophile ring.

It has also emerged that Dame Barbara Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions, endorsed the decision to prosecute the men. In a letter to Brian Iddon, MP for Bolton South-East, Dame Barbara insisted that the prosecution was in the public interest.

Amnesty yesterday called on the Government to amend laws that penalise gay men for private, consensual sexual conduct. Soraya Bermejo, a spokeswoman, said: "The law as it stands constitutes a violation of human rights."

Shops merger blow for poorer families

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

SUPERMARKET customers could lose out on bargains when the high-street chains Kwik Save and Somerfield merge, consumer groups warned yesterday. Families on low incomes would be hardest hit, according to retail experts.

The £1bn merger, which was confirmed yesterday, would lead to less price cutting across the typically cut-throat supermarket sector, they said. This could mean an end to the "price wars" tactics of recent years which have seen supermarkets charge as little as 3p for a tin of baked beans and 7p for a bottle of bleach.

"We would be concerned if there was a situation where lower income groups didn't have access to supermarkets which catered for their needs," the Consumers' Association said.

KWIK SAVE SOMERFIELD

Retail tie-up: Deal could mean end of heavy discounting

"We would not want to see this move limit consumer's choices."

Clive Vaughan, retail consultant Verdict Research agreed, saying: "The long-term impact of this merger is that there will be less discounting."

The merger of Somerfield and Kwik Save will create Britain's fifth largest supermarket group with 1,400 stores. Somerfield plans to convert around 100 branches of Kwik Save to its Somerfield format over the first year. Longer term, it is possible that the number of Kwik Save stores could be reduced from 880 now to 200-300.

Kwik Save is Britain's biggest discount supermarket group and its prices are typically 5-6 per cent cheaper than those at rivals such as Tesco, Sainsbury and Somerfield. As more Kwik Saves are converted to the mid-market Somerfield format, it could lead to higher prices, experts say. Given that Kwik Save is one of the few supermarket groups still operating from high streets rather than out-of-town superstores, consumer groups are worried that the Somerfield deal might mean lower income groups are robbed of their local cheap food outlet.

Somerfield yesterday stressed that it would retain Kwik Save's "no frills" ranges of cheaper products in stores that were converted and said shoppers would benefit from more fresh foods, better service and improved shop environments. However, City analysts say the cost-savings of the merger are unlikely to be passed on to customers in lower prices.

Kwik Save's head office in Prestatyn, Clwyd, with 800 staff, is earmarked for phased closure over the next few years. Around 120 shops are likely to be either sold or closed.

Somerfield and Kwik Save have decided to merge in order to form a stronger company to battle against the so-called "Big Four" of Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda and Safeway. Both have been under pressure in recent years and have struggled to retain market share.

Shares soar, page 21

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Killers who put Sinn Fein in the dock

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

THE identity of the killers of a 30-year-old Catholic man from County Armagh remained a mystery last night, with conflicting theories about whether republicans or loyalists were responsible.

If the IRA is found to be responsible the result is likely to be a clamour not just to suspend Sinn Fein temporarily from the multi-party talks process, as is about to happen, but to exclude them permanently. The identity of those responsible has thus assumed vital political significance.

The British and Irish governments will, probably today, announce the exclusion of Sinn Fein from the process because the RUC has said two recent Belfast killings were the work of the IRA. A sustained Sinn Fein attempt to avert expulsion, which took up three days of the talks process in Dublin earlier this week, has been unsuccessful.

A republican attempt to have the Dublin High Court issue an injunction against their expulsion was yesterday adjourned.

The governments' verdict means that Sinn Fein will not be eligible to enter the talks when they re-convene in Belfast on Monday. On past form the republicans can be expected to mount a symbolic protest by turning up for the talks in the knowledge that they will encounter a lock-out.

The initial theory was that the latest shooting was the work of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, currently the most active of the loyalist paramilitary groups. By yesterday afternoon, however, security sources were suggesting that republican responsibility was more likely, and at 5pm the LVF issued a statement denying involvement. Sinn Fein, by contrast, insisted that loyalists were responsible, calling on the RUC to release forensic details of the weapon used.

The dead man was Kevin Conway, a married man with a three-month-old child. He went missing from his home in the Catholic Kilwiltick estate on Tuesday and his body was discovered in a derelict farm-



Killing fields: South Armagh, a notorious stronghold of the IRA, where many troops have been killed

Photograph: Pacemaker

house in the loyalist Aghalee area on Wednesday. Mr Conway's hands were tied behind his back with wire, and he had been killed by a shotgun blast to the head. He was wearing bedroom slippers when found.

Last July the LVF shot dead a teenage Catholic girl, Bernadette Martin, as she slept in the home of her Protestant boyfriend a

few hundred yards away from the spot where Mr Conway's body was discovered. While LVF involvement is not completely discounted, the theory of republican involvement is based on a number of factors.

To begin with, the shooting might fit into the pattern of the two other recent killings, which the IRA carried out but did not ad-

mit. Loyalist killers normally gun down their victims on the spot, while Mr Conway was led out of an estate, apparently without a struggle, in daylight. These facts, together with the fact that he was shot in the head while his hands were bound, give rise to the theory that he was abducted by republicans.

Arguing that loyalists were responsible,

Sinn Fein councillor John O'Dowd said: "We believe Mr Conway may have left the area with somebody he knew, voluntarily, and he has fallen into the hands of loyalist gunmen. He did deal, he bought and sold goods, and he may have dealt with the wrong individual and fallen into the hands of these people."

Rapist jailed for three years

A MAN who claimed a woman made him tea and sandwiches after consenting to sex and bondage was yesterday jailed for raping her.

A jury convicted 39-year-old Steven Williams of rape after retiring for just over three hours at Truro Crown Court.

Williams, of Liskeard, east Cornwall, who denied the offence, was jailed for three-and-a-half years by Judge Jeremy Griggs. He also ordered Williams to register with the police as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

The jury heard that before raping the woman, who was in her thirties, Williams taped her mouth, and bound her hands to her ankles with insulating tape. The judge told Williams that he had subjected the woman to "extreme fear".

Briton found shot

A BRITON murdered on the first day of a trip to Florida could have been killed in a robbery, police said yesterday. Anthony Pike, 42, son of a wealthy hotelier in Spain, was naked and had no belongings when he was found shot dead in woods at Virginia Key.

Police contacted officials in Britain to confirm the identity after discovering a form with Mr Pike's name on it lying near the body, which was found on Monday - 12 hours after he arrived in the US on a business trip.

Police vendetta

OFFICERS pursued disciplinary action against an inspector in a bid to suppress allegations of a vendetta against her, a tribunal ruled. The judgment against Lincolnshire Chief Constable Peter Bensley says Inspector Cydenna Fleming was suspended as a "set up" to deflect attention from her claims of discrimination. The judgment found Lincolnshire Police had victimised her but cleared the force of sex discrimination.

Editor cleared

THE editor of satirical magazine *Scaevy* was cleared of acting illegally over secret computer files taken from former defence minister Michael Portillo's office.

But Judge George Bathurst-Norman told Simon Regan, 55, he was allowing his appeal against a magistrates' court conviction only "with very great regret".

Publicans urged to ban habitual drunkards in anti-violence drive

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Pubs owners and local authorities are being urged to ban more drunken troublemakers from bars and clubs as part of an anti-violence initiative in town centres. Beer bottles should also be barred

from pubs and clubs where violence is commonplace and greater use made of laws to outlaw underage drinking in public.

The Home Office wants action to reduce the estimated 13,000 violent incidents that take place in and around pubs in Britain every week. George Howarth, the Home Office minister, yesterday called on publi-

cans, magistrates and local councils to work closely with the police to improve safety.

The city of York was highlighted as a good example of how to tackle drunken louts. Using the Inebriates Act 1898, and the Licensing Act 1902, the police have banned habitual drunks from the city's pubs. Anyone who commits three drinking of-

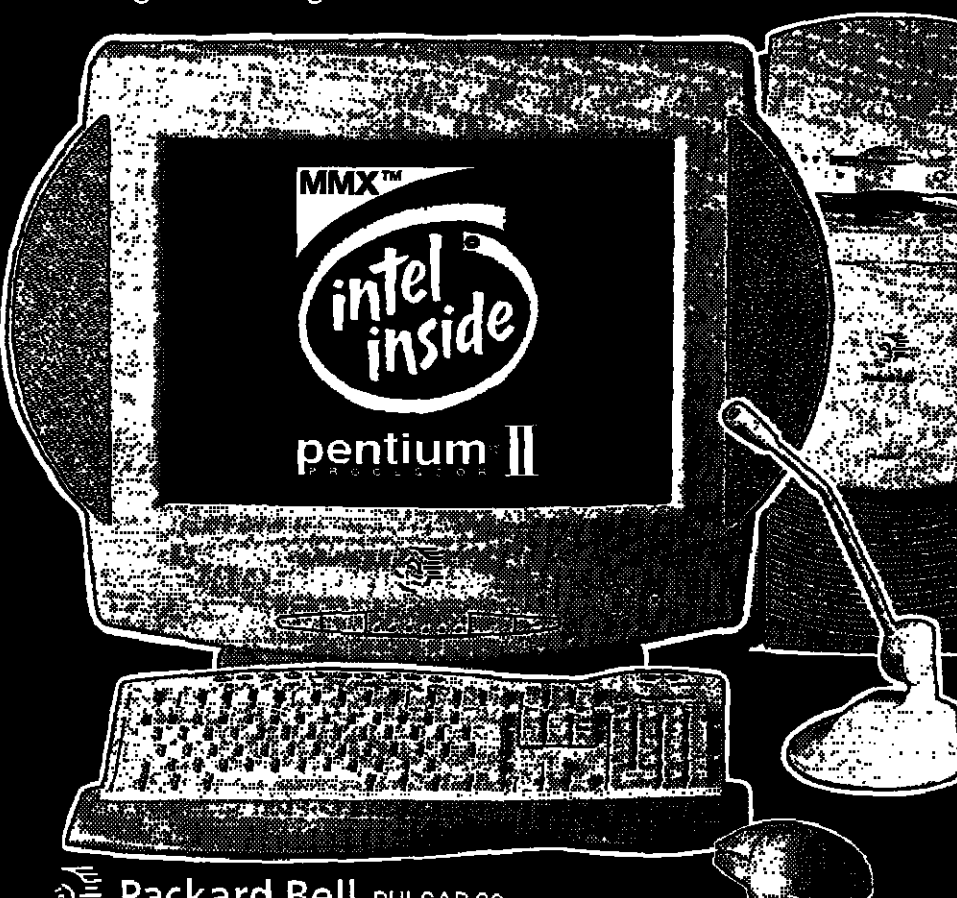
fences can be banned for three years. The offender's photograph is circulated to all pubs. Glass-makers have also pledged to bring in new toughened products that will not splinter causing horrific facial injuries.

Speaking to a Crime Concern Conference in London, Mr Howarth cited research from the 1996 British Crime Survey sug-

gesting that about one in six violent incidents in England and Wales take place in or near pubs. He said: "I want our towns and cities to be safe for everyone to enjoy. Partnership is the key to reclaiming the social and commercial hearts of our communities from the drunken yobs who have made them no-go areas."

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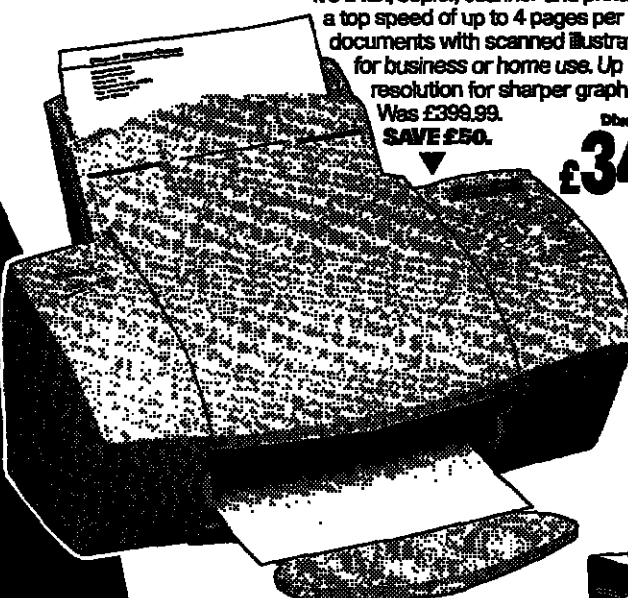
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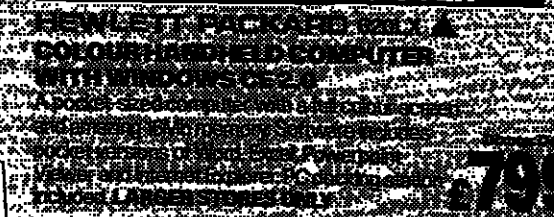
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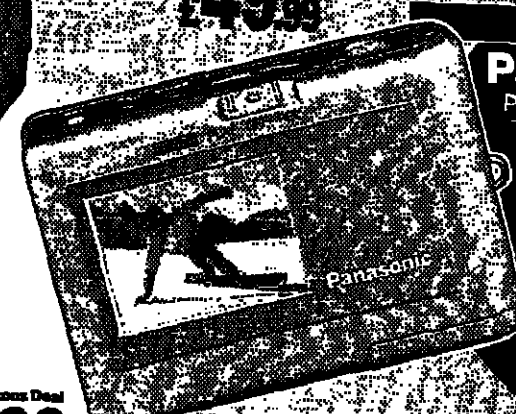
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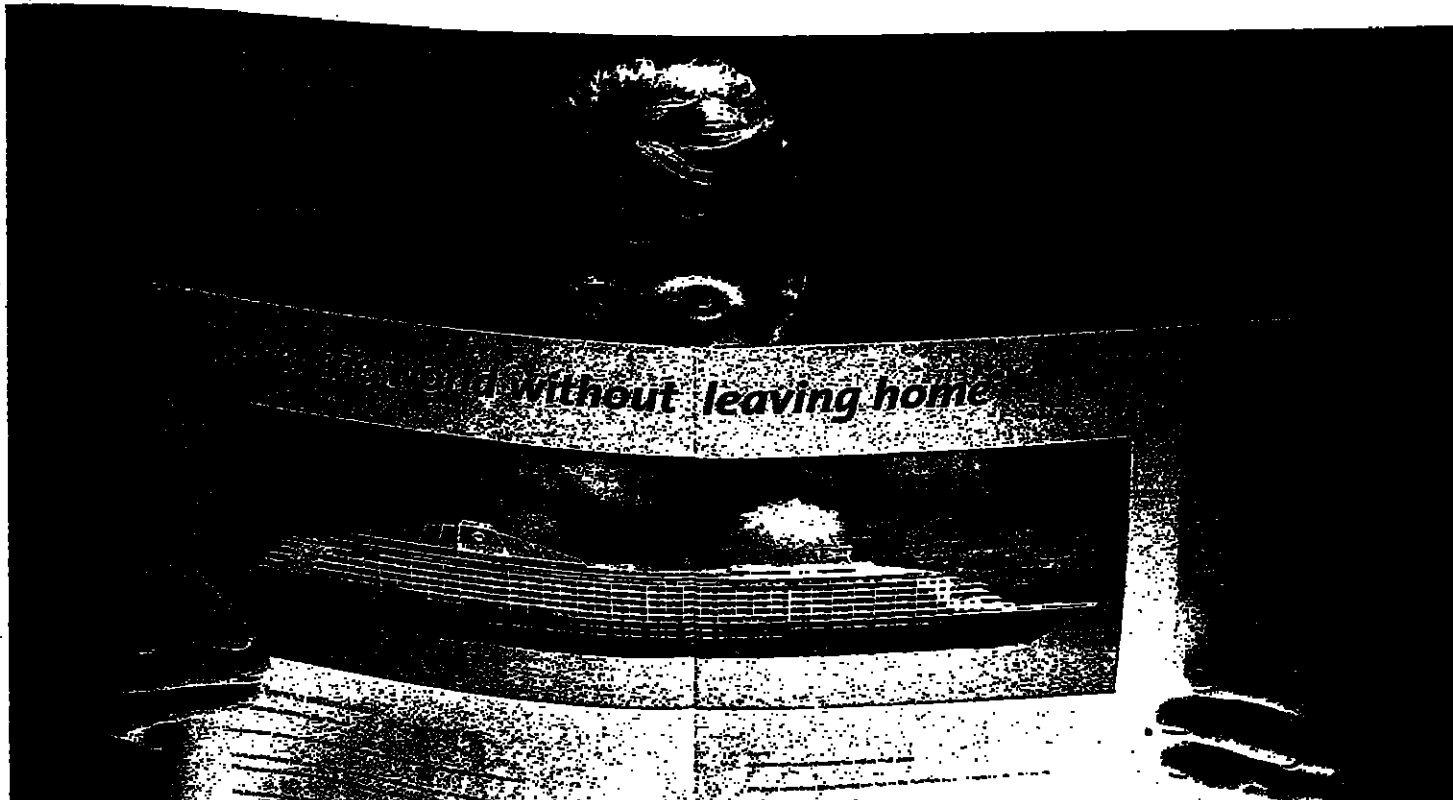
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Rush to secure rooms with a view on world's first luxury floating apartment block



Dream views: The brochure for the luxury floating apartments, one of which has been bought by Peter Beckwick (right). Photograph: David Sandison

By Louise Jury

MORE THAN 50 apartments worth \$100m (£62m) have been sold in what is planned as the world's first luxury floating apartment block.

Agents for the sale of homes in the *World of ResidenSea* revealed yesterday that they have purchasers for one in five of the apartments on offer, six months after the scheme was launched. And the company behind the £300m liner now intends to go ahead with confirming the contract to have it built. Fredy Dellis, chief executive of ResidenSea Ltd, said: "By achieving \$100m of sales, we have reached an important milestone for the company. This confirms the power of the product."

The ship is the brainchild of Knut Kloster Jr, a member of the Norwegian family which is credited with starting the holiday cruise industry in the 1960s. The intention is that the ship - due for delivery in 2002 - will sail the world, attending the most glittering events on the international social calendar from the Grand Prix in Monaco to the Rio carnival.

It will boast a spa, tennis courts, seven restaurants and a supermar-

ket when it is launched. But there will also be full office facilities for those who have to keep earning the money to fund life on the waves.

One of the 51 purchasers confirmed so far said yesterday: "Many people may take the view that they can't quite fathom it out."

But the 55-year-old business-

man and his artist wife were more than happy to spend nearly £1m to secure their place on the 1,000ft, 85,000 ton ship, which will be bigger than the *Queen*. "I've always liked the idea of having different homes in different places, but that is expensive and rather inconvenient to keep control," he said. "I've had holiday homes before and I was thinking of another holiday home when

this came up. Time will tell [whether it will work], but the people behind it seem fairly strong. Anything new is always a worry, but it seems a good idea from a business point of view."

He expects to use it for around three months a year, and will probably rent it out for the other nine. But he thinks it will prove a good buy. In addition to the confirmed sales, 27 have been reserved, ranging in value from £800,000 to £4.5m. But Charles Weston-Baker, of the estate agents Savills which is handling the project in London, said few of the monied people interested in the project wished to be identified.

One exception is the businessman Peter Beckwick, also famed for his "It girl" daughter Tamara. The 53-year-old entrepreneur, heard about the scheme when he sat next to its chief executive on a flight back from Nice.

As a major shareholder in the Harbour fitness club, he is now hoping to get the franchise to run the sports and leisure facilities on board. But he has bought a £1.25m apartment, which he expects to use for a few weeks a year, with the rest taken up by friends and family.



Pro-life leader wins propaganda battle

By Ian Burrell

Britain's electoral laws were thrown into chaos yesterday after a victory in the European courts for an anti-abortion campaigner.

The ruling opens up the way for American-style election battles over the views of individual candidates on single issues such as abortion, hunting and gay rights.

Campaign groups will be able to spend as much as they like on leafletting and broadcasting in the immediate period before an election in order to promote a favoured candidate or denigrate a rival.

Under The Representation of the Peoples Act 1983, a limit of £5 is imposed on unauthorised electioneering.

But the European Court of Human Rights backed a case brought by Phyllis Bowman, the executive director of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, who had been prosecuted for activities during the 1992 election.

Ms Bowman spent £10,000 distributing 25,000 leaflets in the constituency of Halifax, West Yorkshire, citing Alice Mahon, the sitting Labour MP as a leading pro-abortionist who had voted "to allow human embryos to be used as guinea-pigs".

Although the prosecution was dropped on a technicality, Ms Bowman took the case to Strasbourg, where judges ruled that her rights to freedom of expression had been infringed.

On hearing the news yesterday, Ms Mahon, still MP for Halifax, said: "I think it has really serious consequences for the democratic process. The person with the largest purse or wallet will be able to buy a candidate."

But John Wadham, director

of Liberty, the civil rights group which opposes Ms Bowman's views on abortion, nevertheless welcomed the ruling. "The ability to participate in free political debate at election time is an essential ingredient of the democratic process," he said.

The decision will clear the way for anti-abortion campaigners to spend unlimited sums on posters and literature criticising electoral candidates who oppose their views.

"This could be very useful," said Jack Scarisbrick, the national chairman of LIFE. "Anything that opens up the way for the pro-life cause to be better communicated to the people, the better."

But Amanda Callaghan of the pro-choice Birth Control Trust, said that the anti-abortion campaigners would be wasting their money.

She pointed out that an expensive campaign at last year's election by the Pro-Life Alliance party had won only 19,000 votes in 56 constituencies.

"They have already spent the money and it made no difference," she said. Ms Callaghan added that if the changes in the rules did lead to a propaganda war, the pro-choice campaigners would respond in kind. "We have never shied away from a free and frank exchange of views on this subject," she said.

The Home Office, which is obliged to abide by Human Rights rulings, said it was "disappointed" by the finding, the Labour government's first defeat at Strasbourg.

Ms Bowman said she had taken her stand because election candidates avoided telling voters their views on key issues. In the past, the act has been used to prevent electioneering by anti-nuclear and anti-nazi groups.

DAILY POEM

Fat Sod's Law

By Carol Rumens

Diet gurus advertise:
Shrink that beer-gut! Slim those thighs!

But the scientists argue warmly
Fat-cells vanish uniformly!

Both are wrong. You lose weight first
From the bits that aren't your worst.

Areas you'd thought all right
Dwindle almost overnight

While the bad bits seem to grow
First to come and last to go.

"Fat Sod's Law" comes from *The Miracle Diet*, which combines verse by Carol Rumens and cartoons by Viv Quillin. The book takes a light, but nourishing, look at issues of food, fat, weight, and the social pressures to consume and conform. It is published this week by Bloodaxe (£6.95).

Shopping this weekend? Don't forget the list.

- 1 special edition (pref. 3 doors)
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 - 5 speed transmission
 - Get a nice colour: Cherry Red? Shannon Green? Indigo Blue? Bianca White?
 - Engine immobiliser
 - Twin speaker radio/cassette (not tinny)
 - Silver inserts to bumpers & protective side mouldings
 - Tinted glass (ice cool)
 - Rear fog lamp
 - LATEST finance deals?!!!
 - 3rd brake light
 - HEADLAMPS MUST BE HALOGEN
 - DON'T FORGET!
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Call to arms: Jocelyn Stevens, of English Heritage, at site of the Battle of Tewkesbury which he hopes to save from development

Photograph: Jay Williams

Jocelyn Stevens re-runs the Battle of Tewkesbury

By Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

THE SPECTRE of executive homes spreading across the historic battlefields of England was raised yesterday as both English Heritage and battle re-enactment groups prepared to defend the field on which Edward IV routed the Lancastrians in 1471 at the Battle of Tewkesbury.

Standing on the Gaston Field where Queen Margaret readied her Yorkist army, Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of the heritage quango, said a plan to build 51 houses on such an important historic site was "an absolute disgrace".

Opposition to the development proposal was first reported in *The Independent* last year, when the alarm was raised by battle re-enactment groups, notably the local Companions of the Black Bear. Now, with English Heritage heading a powerful coalition to protect the site, the issue will go before a public inquiry opening on 10 March in the Gloucestershire town.

Bryant Homes Mercia Ltd wants to build the houses on what remains of the

heart of the battlefield. Tewkesbury council was caught in a dilemma as its local plan earmarks the area for housing.

Tewkesbury was a crushing defeat for the Lancastrians under Margaret of Anjou. The Yorkists' opening bombardment provoked an attack which was repulsed. Retreating across the rain-swollen meadow, so many of Margaret's soldiers were slaughtered by the Yorkists that another part of the battlefield is still known as the Bloody Meadow.

Gaston Field will be an important test for *Register of Historic Fields*, published by English Heritage in 1995. Although it has no statutory backing, the register stresses the importance of preserving sites such as Tewkesbury.

The Yorkists went on to rule England for 14 years. Queen Margaret was imprisoned and her husband, Henry VI, executed. But hopefully the public inquiry will not be as grisly as the battle. According to one chronicler, the retreating Duke of Somerset denounced another commander, Lord Wenlock, as a traitor, took up his axe and "strake y braynes out of his hedde".

Dobson: I'm sorry about rise in waiting lists

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A multi-million pound boost to NHS spending is on the way in the Chancellor's spring Budget following yesterday's record

waiting-list figures, which threaten to break a key Labour election pledge. Treasury ministers were engaged in discussions with the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, who is seeking an extra £500m for the health

service over the next 12 months. Mr Dobson, who has the Prime Minister's backing, went as far as he could in public yesterday in signalling that he has won his battle in principle with the Treasury to gain more money

for the health service. Pressed to say when there would be good news for the health service, Mr Dobson said: "Soon." Asked how soon, Mr Dobson said: "Watch this space." The argument with Gordon Brown

and Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, is over how much extra he will get in the Budget on top of the additional £1.5bn announced by Mr Brown in last year's Budget.

Mr Dobson, regarded by

many as Old Labour, won plaudits from the Prime Minister's office for his handling of the latest figures showing hospital waiting lists have risen by 100,000 since Labour came to power, to a total 1,250,000 patients waiting for treatment.

The Health Secretary adopted the approach of admitting some responsibility for the rising figures and said they were embarrassing the Government. "There's no point in me pretending that these are not bad figures. I have got to take some responsibility for it, because I am not going to pretend that I am not partly responsible."

Mr Dobson's decision to tackle the crisis facing accident and emergency departments contributed to the higher figures, because it delayed the numbers waiting for elective surgery. Labour went into the election promising to cut waiting lists by 100,000 and yesterday's figures mean Labour will have to double the cut to 200,000 by the end of the Par-



Dobson: Seeking an extra £500m for health service

liament to avoid breaking its pledge.

Mr Blair has told Cabinet colleagues, including the Chancellor, that he is determined the Government will not break its promise to the voters on health. Whitehall sources said it was crucially important to protect the health service this year, which marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the NHS by a Labour government. The Prime Minister knows

he will face a backbench rebellion over the NHS if he fails to order more money for it. Unrest on the Labour backbench surfaced at Prime Minister's question time on Wednesday when Dennis Skinner called for more money.

The Chancellor is resisting raising the contingency reserve, which could be wiped out by the cost of a war with Iraq. But Labour MPs are confident Mr Dobson will win more. Rhodri Morgan, a former Labour spokesman on health in Wales, said: "There will be huge celebrations in July for the 50th anniversary and a number of MPs will be visiting the grave of Nye Bevan. If waiting lists are still going up then, people will be expecting to hear him reviving in his grave."

The number waiting more than the patients' charter limit of 18 months rose from 385 in June to 974 at the end of December but Mr Dobson is on track to fulfil the pledge and stop such long waits by the end of March.

Faulty artificial hip was never tested

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A TYPE of artificial hip which increases the risk of fracture in some of the 4,700 patients who have received it was never tested or subjected to clinical trials before it was released on to the market in 1991, the Department of Health confirmed yesterday.

No approval system was in place when the Capital hip, made by 3M Healthcare, was introduced, and there was no monitoring system to detect problems when they developed.

Yesterday, the department issued a hazard warning about the device and said all patients who have received it must be traced and recalled for examination followed by a repeat operation where necessary.

The Capital hip was one of the cheaper devices on the market, priced at £250-£350. It was withdrawn in the UK in March last year for "commercial reasons", according to the company, although it is still sold overseas. There had already been early reports of problems and it is likely these had hit sales. In some patients the shaft inserted into the femur (thigh-bone) worked loose and eroded healthy bone.

Dr Jeremy Metters, the Government's deputy chief medical officer, said the Capital hip had been distributed to between 90 and 100 hospitals in Britain and hard evidence of its high failure rate had become available from three hospitals only last week. That showed one in five of the hips had failed over five years compared with an expected rate of one in 10 over 10 years.

Dr Metters said first reports of problems with the hip two years ago had been followed up but the department had been unable to gather the necessary evidence.

"My worry was that we deliberately went out to gain that

evidence and we were unable to obtain it. We tried very hard."

He said that the Government would now consider setting up a national register of orthopaedic implants, as operated in Sweden, to keep track of devices and pick up problems early.

"There are 11,000 medical devices and to keep tabs on all of them is inappropriate. However, we have to look to see if there is a better way to keep in touch with orthopaedic implants." Under European Union regulations which take effect in June, all devices will have to be licensed before being marketed.

More than 250,000 hip replacements took place in Britain between 1991 and 1997 so fewer than one in 50 received a Capital hip but neither patients nor GPs will know who they are, Dr Metters said. The task of tracing them will fall to the hospitals and will take several months, he said. The situation was not urgent and patients who were not contacted need not worry.

The cost of recalling and re-operating on affected patients could exceed £20m but the department said it was "too early" to say whether it would be seeking compensation from the company. BUPA said all private patients treated in BUPA-owned hospitals would be covered for investigation and repeat operation, whether or not they were members of BUPA.

Janine Tobias of the Manchester-based solicitors Panone said patients affected could have a claim for compensation under the Consumer Protection Act 1987. "All they have to prove is that the product is defective and they have suffered injury," she said.

Patients who want advice can ring the NHS information service on 0800 665544.

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IBM has helped one of the world's largest airlines to link their established reservations and ticketing systems to the Web - allowing them to sell tickets over the Net. The processing cost of a conventional airline ticket is around £5 - an e-ticket only costs about 62p.

Chelsea Football Club has launched its online MegaStore, built and hosted by IBM Global Services. Supporters worldwide can purchase official merchandise and gather up-to-the-minute information on match results and players. The site gets an average 350,000 hits a day - that's a staggering four per second.



Solutions for a small planet

Male, female or neuter? Dome's statue keeps sex under wraps

THE gigantic figure dominating the millennium Dome will "amaze and inspire" visitors, its designers said yesterday. As the debate continues over whether the figure will be male, female or gender-neutral, its creators said it was unlike anything before and predicted it would draw visitors to the controversial Greenwich exhibition.

A model of the figure, taller than the Statue of Liberty and bigger than Nelson's Column even sitting down, is due to be put on show next week when Tony Blair unveils plans for what will go inside the Dome. An early prototype model, revealed for the first time on Carlton's *London Today* programme, showed a vast reclining male with a baby kneeling at his feet.

Julian Pullar, managing director of the designers, HP ICM, said it would be a huge attraction for the 12 million visitors expected. "I think they should want to come to see it because nothing like this has ever been seen before. It's totally different from anything ever seen in a museum or a theme park."



Model family: An early prototype of the proposed Dome figures, showing a vast reclining male with a baby kneeling at his feet. Photograph: PA

MPs call for sleaze check on task forces

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

THE Prime Minister has been told by a committee of MPs to open lists of "Blair's People" - involved in more than 50 task forces and review panels - to public scrutiny to prevent any hint of Tony Blair's patronage turning into sleaze.

Fears that the extension of the Prime Minister's powers of patronage to the task forces could lead to sleaze were raised by the Commons Select Committee on Public Administration, chaired by a former Labour frontbench spokesman, Rhodri Morgan, the Labour MP for Cardiff West.

Yesterday Mr Morgan told *The Independent*: "These task forces are completely new to the British system and they involve ministers, civil servants and appointees. They are right at the heart of government, and they are not like quangos which are outside, at arm's length."

"It is for that reason that a colossal privilege of influence is being given to the task forces. We are not talking about pay. We are talking about influence. The appointments need to be regulated, monitored and audited for abuses of privilege."

A host of task forces, mixing celebrities, pop stars, prominent industrialists, a few trade unionists, ministers and civil servants, have been appointed by ministers since the election but so far none of the appointments have been subjected to public scrutiny.

They are largely unpaid, and include Sir David Puttnam, the film producer; fashion designer Paul Smith; Alan McGee, head of Creation Records and a major party donor; and Virginia boss Richard Branson. All are

members of the creative industries task force.

Not all the team members are Labour supporters. Other teams include David Mellor, the former Tory minister, appointed by fellow Chelsea fan, Tony Banks, the sports minister, as chairman of the football task force.

Other teams include designer Terence Conran, John Monks, the TUC general secretary, Adair Turner, head of the CBI, and trade union leader John Edmonds (competitive); and Sir Peter Davis, chief executive of the Prudential, trade union leaders Bill Morris and Rodney Bickerstaff, and Shami Ahmed, the boss of Joe Bloggs jeans (welfare to work).

The committee said they should be brought within the scope of public scrutiny by Sir Len Peach, the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government has announced it is opening up nationalised industries, public corporations and the regulators to checks on appointments by Sir Len, but not the task forces.

The committee said 22 task forces had been established, with 48 advisory groups, panels, or review bodies, plus two cross-departmental policy coordination bodies.

"Departments seem to be free to select members of such bodies as they wish, despite the fact that they may have considerable influence and prestige. We believe that this is an anomalous and unacceptable situation. There should clearly be rules and guidance for these appointments as well. We recommend that the Government bring all advisory bodies, groups and task forces within the remit of the Commissioner," said the committee.

Are homeless people worth just 2 minutes of your time?

THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS families in the UK has almost doubled in the last fifteen years. Shelter thinks much more decisive action is needed.

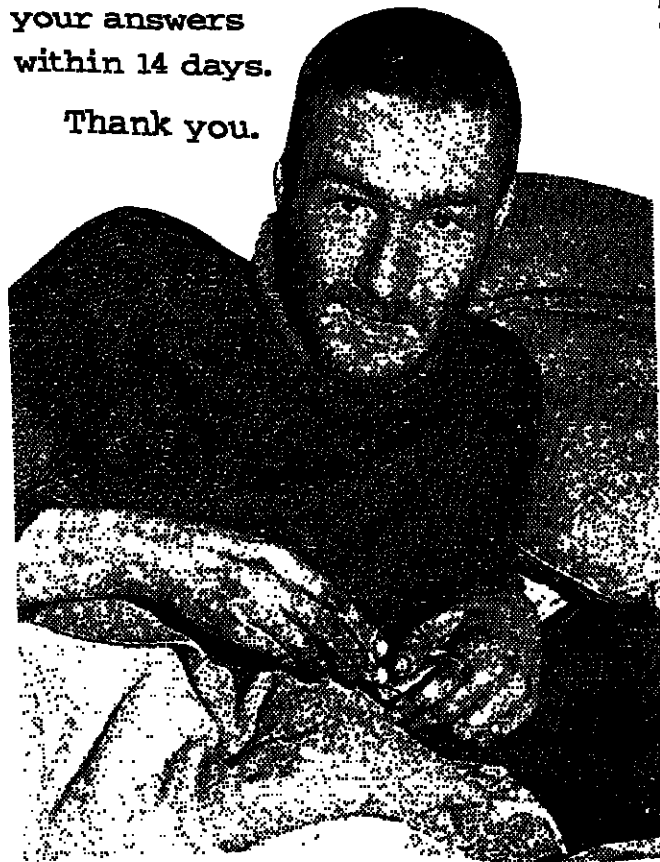
Providing decent housing for homeless people makes economic sense in the long term. The savings on health care costs alone would make it financially worthwhile. And what price do you put on ruined lives? The children, for instance, who may never know a real home...

It's not about politics, it's about getting homeless people decent homes, and off the streets. But to tackle Britain's housing crisis effectively we have to keep in touch with public opinion.

Please spend just two minutes of your time completing this survey, and return it as soon as you can.

If you can also make a donation of £15 (or whatever you can afford) we would be very grateful. Please let us have your answers within 14 days.

Thank you.



1998 Shelter National Opinion Survey on Homelessness

Please help us make this the widest ever survey of attitudes to homelessness. Your contribution will be much appreciated, and your answers treated in the strictest confidence. Please complete and return within 14 days.

Q1. Are you aged:

18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐
45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65-74 ☐ 75+ ☐

Q2. Do you:

Own your own home or have a mortgage? ☐
Rent privately? ☐
Rent from a Housing Association or local authority? ☐
Live in someone else's home? ☐
Other ☐

Q3. Do you share your home with:

Children? Yes ☐ No ☐
Partner/husband/wife or anyone else related to you? Yes ☐ No ☐
Someone not related to you? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q4. Have you ever been homeless or at serious risk of losing your home yourself (through a tenancy ending, not being able to afford the rent or mortgage, break up of relationship, or other reason)? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q5. Do you know anyone else who is either homeless or at serious risk of losing their home in such a way?

At risk of homelessness Yes ☐ No ☐
Actually homeless Yes ☐ No ☐

Q6. Bad housing can have serious long-term consequences. Please show how important you view these problems (tick one box only for each problem; 1 being the most important):

Children doing badly at school ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
People suffering asthma, bronchitis and other serious diseases ☐ ☐ ☐
People becoming more dependent on social services ☐ ☐ ☐

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PLEASE RETURN
WITHIN 14 DAYS

Q7. Do you think politicians are at present sufficiently concerned about the plight of homeless people? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

Q8. Would you be willing to write a letter to an MP which might help to get homeless people housed? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

Q9. Would you be willing to make a donation to Shelter to help homeless people? Yes ☐ No ☐

Name: (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ms

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No:

Thank you for your time. If you would like to make a donation, please complete the section below. We suggest £15, but any amount you can give will be greatly appreciated.

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☐ Please charge the above sum to my MasterCard/Visa/CAF Charity card no:

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Signature

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More teachers for popular schools

By Matt Rodda

THE Government has pledged to help parents try to get children into popular primary schools.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, told MPs that there would be enough money set aside by the Government to pay for more teachers and extra classrooms in more popular schools.

Head teachers had been concerned that children would be turned away because of the Government's limit of 30 children in a class for five-, six- and seven-year-olds.

Mr Byers made the announcement during the committee stage of the Government's Education Bill yesterday.

He said that where possible children should be taught in their parents' preferred school.

Parents who had expressed a preference for a popular school would not be placed in a failing or unsatisfactory school.

Local education authorities would be expected to provide extra spaces at popular schools to cope with the extra demand.

"In rural schools extra money will be provided for a new teacher so a child can attend their local school in a class of 30 or fewer and not be forced to travel an unreasonable distance to a school with empty places," he said.

Money would be found for more teachers from the abolition of the Assisted Places Scheme.

Officials anticipate the move will provide up to £100m during the lifetime of this parliament.

The money for extra classrooms would come from the £1bn put aside for school building work by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, in his budget last summer.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, praised the Government for responding to the association's concerns that children could be turned away from popular schools.

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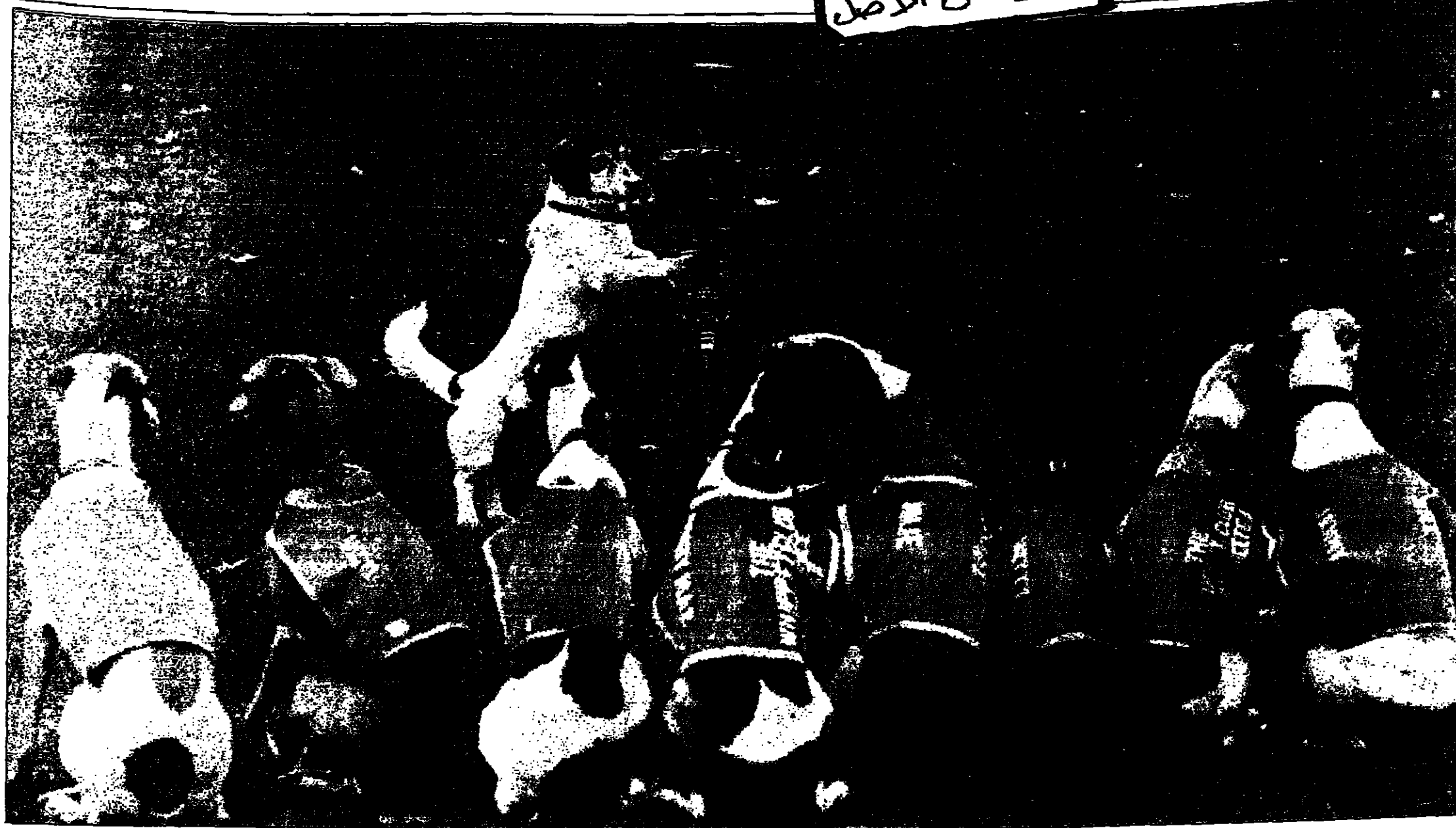
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(centre spread, tabloid section.)

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Pack drill: Strapper the Jack Russell gets behind the camera for a whippet team's obedience line-up at the Kennel Club's pre-Cruffs photocall in Green Park, central London, yesterday. The annual dog show will be held from 5-8 March at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham and more than 20,000 pedigrees and crossbreeds are expected to compete. Photograph: Philip Meech



Prince 'kept 40 girls at Dorchester'

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THE BROTHER of the world's richest man kept up to 40 prostitutes at London's Dorchester Hotel at any one time, the High Court heard yesterday.

The women were procured for Prince Jefri of Brunei by an English madam or brought in from the Far East under the pretence that they were servants.

The extraordinary details of Prince Jefri's lifestyle were outlined by his former emissary on the seventh day of a trial that could become one of the most

expensive personal actions in British legal history.

Bob Manoukian, 53, and his brother Rafi, 44, are suing the prince for £80m, claiming he failed to honour two deals. The Prince is counter-suing for £100m, saying Rafi Manoukian exploited a friendship and made unreasonable profits out of him.

The Manoukian brothers say the 44-year-old prince reneged on a £55m deal to buy the Adelphi in London's Strand and a £25m verbal deal to renovate the first five storeys of the prince's London home at 45 Park Lane.

Bob Manoukian said in a written statement of his evidence that their relationship broke down because of the Prince's lifestyle.

"In 1993, Rafi told me that Prince Jefri had started to arrange for girls to be brought in from the USA. This seemed to me a serious mistake," he said.

"My view was that bringing in girls from the USA would be likely to lead to embarrassing publicity. I told Rafi that he should talk to Prince Jefri and warn him of the potential risk he was running but Prince Jefri told him that it was none of our business."

Mr Manoukian said Prince Jefri's conduct was "completely unacceptable by Western standards" and that he was concerned that there would be a rift in the relationship. "Once he came to believe that we were criticising him and disapproving of his behaviour and lifestyle, a breakdown in relations was unavoidable."

In June 1993, Mr Manoukian visited Brunei and saw the disco area at the Assurur (pleasure) Palace and some of the girls brought in for Prince Jefri and his friends. "Rafi and I waited outside the disco in the lobby area while the girls entertained their hosts. I was shocked to see Prince Jefri's young son Bahar and his teenage daughter in the Assurur Palace."

Mr Manoukian's evidence said Prince Jefri wanted to take over the upper floors of 45 Park Lane, the former Playboy Club, because it was close to the Dorchester which the Sultan of Brunei had bought in 1985. The prince subsequently paid £21m.

"The apartments were convenient for the Dorchester, being across the road, and prostitutes could be brought into and taken out of the building in a discreet manner."

Mr Manoukian said Prince Jefri was often late in settling his accounts and was "a significant commercial risk to us". The court heard that the Brunei High Commission eventually paid one bill of £1,331,065, the Brunei Investment Agency settled another of £3,907,874 and Prince Jefri paid a bill of £4,928,858.

The case continues. Questions of taste, page 15

Solution to chewing gum's sticky problem

NON-STICK chewing gum could be on the streets – not literally you understand – within the next five years, a leading manufacturer said yesterday.

Wrigley, the American firm which dominates the market for the 13 million sticks of gum chewed in Britain every day, confirmed it is working on ways of re-engineering its product into a less sticky, bio-degradable alternative.

It is part of a new drive by confectioners, scientists and litter campaigners to cut down on the sticky business of discarded gum, which costs £158m a

year to clear off the nation's pavements.

In a separate project, Manchester-based scientists are in the early stages of researching street cleaners which use micro-waves or lasers in the battle against spent gum.

Philip Hamilton, Wrigley's managing director, told PA News: "We have an in-house team who are looking at ingredients which will make gum less adhesive. We are also exploring gum which will break down over a period of time... but we don't expect to have a finished product for five to 10 years."

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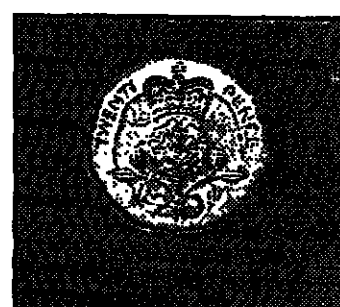
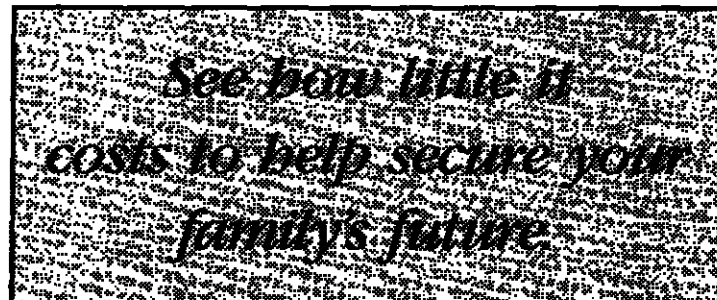
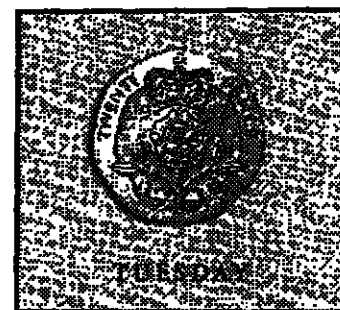
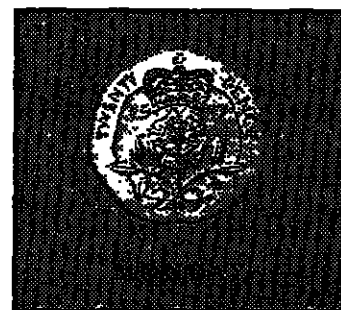
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One in seven women with children and jobs spend half their wages on childcare, reports Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent

Working mothers in childcare cash trap

MORE than half of Britain's working mothers spend more than £50 a week on childcare and 14 per cent spend more than half their earnings, according to a new survey.

While more and more women with children under five are going out to work, they do not believe that they are getting the childcare support they need, the magazine *Right Start* has found.

Following the tragic case of Matthew Eappen, the eight-month-old who died in Massachusetts while being cared for by Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old English au pair, public attention has once again focused on the need to develop high quality affordable childcare.

The magazine found in a survey of more than 500 parents that nearly half rely on unregulated care such as friends or family, with only 2 per cent having a workplace nursery and nearly one-third forced to use

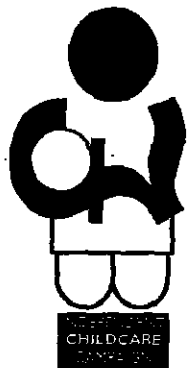
THE SURVEY

more than one sort of childcare. One mother said: "Society still treats working mums as a nasty disease. I had great difficulty finding a childminder - no help from social services and nobody willing to fit in with my shift work as a nurse."

"Women are a valuable part of the workforce," another added. "But we are expected to find a job to fit around childcare and we are made to feel bad if our children are sick and we need to have time off. When we do work we are seen as unfit mothers."

Mothers said that they wanted the state to help with their childcare. "I do feel that this extremely large expense should be subject to tax relief," said one mother. "The Government is trying to encourage single mums to return to work but how about us married mums?"

"Employers could do more



for working parents but they are only interested in cutting staff, doubling workloads and trimming benefits," another said. "Most employers don't offer childcare provision although working parents make up a large proportion of their staff."

Many of those questioned expressed fears over the quality of childcare on offer to them, with more than six out of 10 wanting to see firmer childcare regulations introduced. Nearly

one in three said that they worried about their child's safety and 67 per cent believed discipline was too lax.

"Our survey shows that most parents do not get the affordable high-quality childcare they need to feel confident when they leave their child to go to work," said Lynette Lowthian, the editor of *Right Start*. "We desperately need firmer regulations on childcare, tax concessions and more support from employers."

Colette Kelleher, director of the Daycare Trust, added her support. "The survey highlights the difficulties many parents, particularly working parents, face getting childcare that meets their needs and which they can afford," she said. "British parents pay the highest childcare bills in Europe. Much more could be done by the Government and employers to help parents meet the costs of childcare."

'Men must do part of work'

Responses to our campaign to improve childcare continue to pour in, with readers urging the Government to act soon to help working mothers.

Alison Walters says: "I believe that, in line with European objectives, and the Labour Government's objective of Welfare to Work, it is necessary for help to be given to those most in need, working mothers."

"Given that women earn less than men in many jobs, it seems most inequitable that the workforce should lose out on the unique talents of many women who cannot afford the poverty trap of low wages and high childcare costs."

Says Nikki Chapple, a manager: "I really enjoy working and being a parent and feel a woman should be able to have the choice of working or staying

READERS' VIEW

at home if being financially supported. I would rather work and be poor than be on the dole and vegetate."

Jayne Wright says: "I am a police officer with 14 years' service and have a two-year-old son. I have continued to work full time since the birth of my son. I am now expecting our second child."

"This now faces me with a dilemma: if I continue working I will lose two-thirds of my income in childcare. The alternative is for me to stay at home and leave a career which I enjoy greatly and have considerable experience in."

"It has always seemed ridiculous that I can claim a tax allowance for clothing expenses but something so vital as ap-

propriate childcare does not warrant an allowance.

Liz Seward says: "Working women are never going to have the luxury of a wife at home. But it's about time that the government recognised the enormous burden, both financial and emotional, that women who work have to carry."

Clare McGlynn, from Newcastle Law School, gives her support but adds: "It should be a campaign for better childcare for parents and for tax breaks for parents."

"One of the problems with a lack of childcare, and the fact that women have difficulties combining work and family, is that childcare is seen as the woman's responsibility. Until men take their share of the burden... women will continue to have difficulties."

Gillian Ward, a personnel manager from Surrey, adds: "The March 1998 budget would be a good opportunity for the Government to at least recognise the financial issues [of childcare]."

"My employer has made the effort to accommodate my specific needs as a working mother... I make the effort to work, be independent and be a role model to my daughter but in no way does the Government recognise this effort. Two factors would help this: tax concessions and more accessible childcare."

■ Add your support to our campaign. Write to Glenda Cooper, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 1DL or fax us on 0171 293 2143 or e-mail coop-er@independent.co.uk.

'We have to forget holidays and presents'

CASE STUDY

JANET Peyrardo is a single parent who has gone back to work, part-time, 20 hours a week, writes Glenda Cooper. Two hours a day travelling time to and from work pushes her childcare bill up to £260 a month.

"I live in north London but I work in Knightsbridge and so I have to allow an hour both ways," she says. "I'm looking at paying £60 a week, which is a lot of money when you're only working part-time."

Janet's take-home pay is £800, which she says is "very reasonable", and she gets £155 in Family Credit. On top of childcare each month she has to pay £70 for travel plus rent of nearly £200. It doesn't leave much for her and her daughter Kyra.

"To be honest I don't resent paying for childcare... but the problem is that I can't take on any more work because it just wouldn't be worthwhile. If I took on any more hours I wouldn't get any help and I couldn't afford the childcare. I'm struggling as it is and we're just about managing but it means that we have to forget about things like Christmas or holidays. Kyra is just over a year old now. It was a very hard decision to go back to work but when you're on your own you have to. Otherwise where's the money going to come from? At least this way I do get to spend some time with her. I can get her up and give her her breakfast so I know whatever happens she won't starve, she'll have a good meal inside her and then when I get home there's a bit of time before bed."

"I'd like to see more help increasing the threshold for childcare. And it's just so complicated. You just don't get the benefit. I think there must be a lot of people in my position who would like to go back to work but when they look at the costs of childcare, of travel, they just think that it will be too expensive."

"I am 34 now. I worked for 17 years putting money into the system and I don't think I'm getting anything out of it."



Making ends meet: Janet Peyrardo earns a good wage, but still finds it hard to pay the bills. Her daughter Kyra, she says, misses out on treats like holidays. Photograph: Emma Boam

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Japan conned Blair, claims PoW survivor

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Tokyo

A BRITISH war veteran yesterday accused Tony Blair of letting himself be "conned" by the Japanese government, after delivering an emotional courtroom testimony about his sufferings as a wartime prisoner of the Japanese Imperial Army.

Arthur Titherington, the 76-year-old chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, wept as he described to the Tokyo District Court his life as a slave labourer in the Kinkaseki mine in Taiwan. Along with former POWs and civilian internees from Australia, New Zealand and the United States, he is suing the Japanese government for damages of \$22,000 (£14,000) for each of 25,000 fellow camp survivors worldwide. But, after the visit to Tokyo by Mr Blair last month, lawyers for the group believe that British officials have abandoned attempts to press their case with the Japanese government.

During an hour-long cross-examination by his Japanese lawyer, Mr Titherington's voice cracked as he recalled the brutal treatment and neglect which left only 100 of the 523 men who entered the camp alive at the end of the war. Prisoners were forced to work from dawn until dusk in a copper mine, where they were frequently killed or injured by accidents and rock falls. They were fed one cup of rice a day, and the only medical treatment available to them was in the form of charcoal which their own doctors prescribed for dysentery.

"Beatings could take place at any time, anywhere," Mr Titherington told the three-man panel of judges. "They'd use bamboo sticks, rifle butts, or long-handled hammers. A guard would hide round a

corner, and then jump out and beat you for not bowing to him. Beatings were such that men, if not dead, were left at the point of death. In other words, we lived every moment of every day in fear of death. It is impossible to expect anyone in this room to understand the mental state of a man who had



Arthur Titherington:
Weeps before judges

three-and-a-half years of living in fear, starvation, and illness."

Gilbert Hair, director of the American Centre for Internec Rights, described the health problems he has suffered as a result of malnutrition suffered as a baby in a civilian camp in the Philippines, while a New Zealand internee, Hendrik Zeeman gave an account of life as a teenage prisoner in occupied Java. "I cannot replace my youth, my friends, my health," Mr Zeeman said. "I can however apply for justice, and if justice is not granted Japan has no place among the community of nations."

Lawyers for the Japanese government declined to cross-examine any of the witnesses - the defence does not dispute the facts of the case but contends that all matters of compensation were settled in the 1951 San

Francisco Treaty. In opposition, Mr Blair's ministers supported the POWs' argument that they were still entitled to compensation as individuals, but since being elected they have changed their position.

During a meeting with Mr Blair last month, the Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, expressed his government's "deep remorse and heartfelt apology for the tremendous damage and suffering", a sentiment which he repeated in an article in *The Sun*. But Downing Street's claims that the apology represented a diplomatic success for Mr Blair were contradicted by the Japanese government which insisted that Mr Hashimoto was reaffirming an apology first made by his predecessor in 1995.

"Mr Blair was conned," an emotional Mr Titherington told a news conference after the court hearing. "He came to this country not having been briefed by people who really know about this business. When the present government was in opposition, for us they were going to move the earth. When they got in, they found the earth was too big to move."

After a meeting with Mr Titherington last week, Derek Fatchett, the Foreign Office minister responsible for Asia, issued a statement expressing "the Government's belief that no further funds from the Japanese government would be available for compensation" and hopes for reconciliation in advance of a visit to Britain in May by Emperor Akihito.

Martyn Day, a British solicitor co-ordinating the case, said: "The message we're getting very clearly is that the matter's closed as far as they're concerned, and that we should shut up and not spoil the Emperor's visit."



Penny red: Postage stamps released yesterday featuring China's late paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, to mark the first anniversary of his death. Six new stamps were issued, featuring Deng at various stages of his life. Photograph: Greg Baker/AP

Two Koreas move closer

By Richard Lloyd Parry

AFTER nearly five decades of stalemate, North and South Korea are showing the strongest signs in years of moving towards reconciliation. In letters and news reports delivered yesterday, the secretive government of North Korea called for "dialogue and negotiation" and "a relationship of coalition and unity".

"We make clear that we are willing to have dialogue and negotiation with anyone in South Korea, including political parties and organisations," said Kim Yong Sun, a senior North Korean policy-maker, in a report by the official Korean Central News Agency. "The north and the south must promote co-existence, co-prosperity, common interests, mutual collaboration and unity between fellow countrymen."

At the same time, 70 letters carrying a similar message were delivered to the south at the only border crossing point, the village of Panmunjom. They appear to be timed in advance of the inauguration in Seoul next week of Kim Dae Jung, a former dissident, who was elected in December's presidential poll.

The outgoing president, Kim Young Sam, was the object of merciless vituperation by the north which regarded him as an American puppet. "Change of the administration and the President does not automatically open the way [for co-operation], but the key lies on changes in policies," said the North Korean letters, which maintained Pyongyang's insistence that any improvement in relations depends on the departure of American troops from the south.

Third 'bribe' suicide

By Richard Lloyd Parry

Shokei Arai gave a big clue at the press conference on Wednesday night. "I feel like a drowning man holding on to a straw," he told reporters, after denying the charges against him. "I may not be able to talk to you again ..."

Mr Arai, a 50-year-old member of the Japanese Diet, was later found to have hanged himself in a hotel room.

The news nudged even the results from the Nagano Winter Olympics into second place. For, apart from its shock value, it confirms to the country's most powerful elite institutions that, after decades of turning a blind eye, the Japanese justice system is cracking down on corruption.

Though a Korean by birth, Mr Arai was a model Japanese politician: he at-

tended Tokyo University, worked for the prestigious Ministry of Finance, and was elected as candidate of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. It was his previous career as a finance bureaucrat that apparently led to his downfall.

The prosecutors say Mr Arai accepted 29 million yen in illegal profits from the brokerage firm Nikko Securities - effectively a \$230,000 bribe. His is the third such suicide; an MOF inspector hanged himself after revelations that colleagues had accepted trips to girls bars in return for advance warning of inspections. The president of a company embroiled in a ministerial bribery scandal did the same two days later.

The gossip in Nagatacho, Japan's equivalent of Westminster, is that Mr Arai was no more than a fall guy, and that the big fish are still swimming free.

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Solutions for a small planet

Annan offers oil-for-food deal worth billions

By Rupert Cornwell

CARRYING the stick of new warnings from the United States and Britain, and the carrot of an improved oil-for-food deal for Iraq from the United Nations, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan arrives in Baghdad today for the talks that will decide whether the US and Britain unleash the fiercest attack on Saddam Hussein since the 1991 Gulf War.

After a meeting last night in Paris with President Jacques Chirac of France, which is opposed to air strikes but resigned if all else fails, Mr Annan will fly on to Iraq, arriving in mid-afternoon. Yesterday, he talked by phone with Tony Blair who again underlined that "the threat of force is real", and that Saddam Hussein must grant unfettered access to the UN weapons inspectors, and do so in writing. Upon arrival, Mr Annan

will confer with two senior aides, already in Baghdad to prepare the visit. Over the weekend he will hold the crucial talks with the Iraqi leadership before returning to Paris.

The parallels with seven years ago, when then Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar travelled to Iraq in a vain 11th-hour effort to persuade Iraq to leave Kuwait, are striking. Indeed, the two men compared notes yesterday but agreed, according to

a UN spokesman, that "the times are different".

Then, Mr de Cuellar was given the cold shoulder. This time, however, Mr Annan professes himself "reasonably optimistic" Iraq will comply with the UN, although he cautioned before leaving New York that there was "a great deal of suspicion" between the sides. Even so, he went on, "knowledge and history should help in these discussions... Iraq has been hit

many times and knows what happens when the international community decides to use force". And as President Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, repeated yesterday, force it will be, if President Saddam does not comply.

But, unlike in 1991, the signs - albeit faint - of a diplomatic solution are multiplying. The Vice-President of Iraq, Taha Yassin Ramadan,

promised that Baghdad would be working "very positively" with the Secretary-General, while the Russians declared the visit was a "great opportunity" to end the crisis. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council is set to adopt a resolution to-day that would permit Iraq to sell \$5.3bn (£3.3bn) worth of oil over the next six months - more than double the permitted ceiling - to buy food and other humanitarian supplies.

The move will not take legal effect until a distribution plan is approved by Mr Annan. But the timing is crucial, designed to show that whatever its quarrels with President Saddam, the UN is fully aware of the sufferings of ordinary Iraqis caused by existing sanctions.

On the ground in Baghdad, there were differing pointers to the outcome of the Annan mission. Twenty-nine UN staff left Iraq for Jordan and more will

leave today as a precaution against any air attack. But money changers marked the dinar up by 6 per cent against the US dollar, in the hope that an end to the confrontation is at hand.

A BOMB in Athens yesterday damaged a General Motors dealership in what police said was a possible protest against the United States military confrontation with Iraq. There was heavy damage to the building but no injuries. — AP, Athens

Portrait of Saddam: the man setting the world agenda

Patrick Cockburn charts the life of the Machiavellian figure who relies on tribal loyalties

HE IS a figure from Shakespearean drama: intelligent, but blood thirsty and amoral; a gambler for high stakes always at risk of overplaying his hand. Like Richard III or Macbeth he is driven by ambition to cut a figure in the world.

But Richard reigned for only two years before Bosworth, while Saddam Hussein has ruled Iraq for 30 years.

It is the brutality of his character which has shaped his image in the world and with some reason. But his savagery does not quite explain President Saddam's success in putting his mark on his times.

Although he rules a nation of only 20 million people, the Iraqi leader has succeeded, at immense cost to his own people, in making the behaviour of Iraq one of the pivots on which international politics turn.

The latest crisis provoked by President Saddam puts in doubt the post-Gulf War settlement in the Middle East, United States predominance in the region and America's relationship with its allies in Moscow, Paris, London and beyond. For all his self-aggrandising personality cult Saddam Hussein has succeeded in making himself a leader whose every manoeuvre is watched with intense interest.

He has done it primarily through war. Before Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, Saddam Hussein ruled a country known as a middle-ranking oil power with savagely divisive internal politics. It was scarcely a main player even in the Middle East.

By starting the eight-year long Iraq-Iran war - having appointed himself the Arab world's bastion against the Iranian revolution and with covert support from the West - he made Iraq a key power in the Middle East.

Saddam Hussein won the war against Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian revolution, was forced to say he would "drain the bitter cup" and sue for peace in 1988.

Iraq had suffered a quarter

of a million casualties. In the conflict the Iraqi leader showed two contradictory traits in his character. An exaggerated sense of his own strength when he attacked Iran, but great tactical agility in recovering from this early miscalculation.

Victory in the Gulf War made Iraq the most powerful state in the Gulf. Once again President Saddam overplayed his hand. He invaded Kuwait, under-estimating the reaction of the Arab world and the international community as a whole. He has always been astute in domestic Iraqi politics (he once spent a few years' exile in Egypt but has otherwise not travelled) than in foreign affairs.

In 1991, his army routed, he was able to rally the Sunni Muslim core of his regime in Baghdad and central Iraq. In clinging to power Saddam Hussein showed extreme and well publicised ferocity towards rebels. His multi-layered security system did not fail him.

Less well-known is his Machiavellian flexibility: he withdrew his army from his Kurdish provinces in the belief that the Kurds would turn on each other. He was right. Within three years they were locked in civil war.

Saddam relied on more than the security apparatus and the power of the party in an authoritarian state. He looked to ties of blood, to his extended family, clan and tribe, as the strongest glue to hold in place his authority.

The analogy between Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the rulers of medieval England as portrayed by Shakespeare goes deeper than a similarity in personal characteristics.

In Richard III there are the king, the Royal Family and the nobility. In Iraq there is Saddam Hussein, his Bejjat clan from the town of Tikrit on the Tigris north of Baghdad which provide the high nobility of the regime. The "notables" who man the security services and elite military units come from the allied clans of the Sunni Muslim heartlands of Iraq: the Duri Juburi Dulaim and half a dozen others.

In the eyes of the outside world it is the divisiveness of family and tribal politics which stand out. In 1995, general Hussein Kamel and Saddam Kamel, his sons-in-law and senior figures in the regime, fled



to Jordan after Uday, the eldest son of the Iraqi leader, shot Waiban his uncle, through the leg at a party. The regime seemed to dissolving at the centre.

Six months later Hussein Kamel and his brother returned to Baghdad to be killed by a squad led by their uncle, Ali Hassan al-Majid, on the grounds that they were a treacherous branch of the tribe. "We have the right to sever it," said clan leaders in a statement.

Saddam Hussein has always been skilled in manipulating this complex tribal and clan chessboard. He can also strengthen his hold on power by putting his weight at different times behind tribal, state or party leaders.

His opponents have only once managed to turn tribal leaders against him, in Kurdistan in 1991 when 200,000 Kur-

dish tribesmen fighting with the Iraqi army simply changed sides.

The solidarity at the heart of the regime comes from blood ties, but this is reinforced by the certainty of immediate retribution against dissenters and their families. Occasionally this works to destabilise the government. In 1996, Uday, Saddam's eldest son, was badly wounded by assassins, tipped off by a distant relative seeking revenge for the killing of his father by Saddam Hussein.

For all its obsessive secrecy and apparent complexity Saddam Hussein's system of rule is simpler than it looks.

In more peaceful times one Tikriti notable, having listened to an analysis of how Saddam Hussein held on to power said: "This is too complicated. We exercise power in Iraq today in just

the same way as we did in the town of Tikrit 50 years ago."

Saddam Hussein, born in Tikrit in 1937, was involved in politics from his earliest days, a cadre of the Baath party and a member of a clan with growing power in the army. He was a gunman involved in an assassination attempt against General Abdul Karim Kassem who had overthrown the monarchy in 1958. He spent a brief period in Egypt during which his party took part in a military coup in Baghdad.

He returned to Iraq in time to be jailed when the party was overthrown in 1964. In one of his few recorded instances of humour Saddam Hussein would later say that his wife, Sajida, would bring him messages in prison concealed in the nappies of his infant son Uday. Saddam recalled: "He was an early activist."

In the same year as he became president Saddam Hussein purged his government. He called a cabinet meeting at which he denounced traitors

who opposed his elevation to the presidency by name. They were led away to be tortured and shot. Other members of the government were forced to join the firing squads. His sons Uday and Qusai were brought along to watch their father's vengeance.

Ever since he became president his authority has been absolute. Some parts of his inner family have been promoted and others removed. His half-brother Barzan, once head of the Mukhabarat internal security police, was dispatched to be ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

Saddam Hussein encouraged a marriage policy to strengthen family ties. His son Uday has been engaged at various times to the daughters of his uncle Barzan and his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid.

Saddam consciously promotes people for efficiency and loyalty. The latter usually belong to his tribe or clan. The proportions of different tribes in military formations are carefully worked out.

His own family is above the law. When Uday beat to death Saddam's bodyguard at a party in 1988, Saddam first arrested him then exiled him to Switzerland, but took him back when the Swiss police deported him for carrying a pistol.

Ready for action: An Iraqi factory guard brandishing his assault rifle in front of a giant portrait of President Saddam Hussein, who has so far proved adept at outmanoeuvring his opponents during his 30-year rule in Iraq

Photograph: Faleh Kheiber/Reuters

who opposed his elevation to the presidency by name. They were led away to be tortured and shot. Other members of the government were forced to join the firing squads. His sons Uday and Qusai were brought along to watch their father's vengeance.

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A curious feature of the home life of Saddam Hussein is his liking for gypsy music and dancing. This is common to Tikritis in general. President Bakr used to insist that Iraqi television continually showed gypsy dancers even if it was necessary to cancel the showing of popular football matches. Saddam has similar tastes but has acquired a video machine.

The personality of Saddam remains a mystery; intense pride and belief in his historic role, combined with a pitiless absorption in holding power in Iraq. The attempted coups and insurrections of the last seven years have shown that as one Iraqi put it, it is "no longer the 1960s, when you could plot a coup from outside the country".

The overlapping links of state, party and tribe armour Saddam Hussein against the overthrow of his regime. Having lived through the Gulf War and in a seven-year long political and economic siege, Saddam Hussein, now aged 60, may believe he has survived the worst the world can throw at him.

RAF unit set for gas alert

By Ian Burrell

The Royal Air Force is to send chemical and biological weapons experts to the Gulf to detect Iraqi use of weapons of mass destruction. A 12-strong team from RAF Honington in Suffolk leaves tomorrow and will be based in Kuwait, where the RAF has eight Tornado aircraft, training for possible strikes on Iraq.

While Ministry of Defence officials said they hoped a diplomatic solution could be found to the crisis, the deployment shows British forces are preparing for the worst-case scenario.

As well as testing for the existence of chemical and biological weapons, the Honington team will co-ordinate defences and ensure that personnel are properly trained in protecting themselves from such weapons. The Honington team will work alongside a local chemical and biological weapons alarm system which has already been set up in Kuwait.

During the last Gulf conflict there was controversy over the reliability of the chemical weapons detection equipment used by allied forces. When the Iraqis launched Scud missiles on allied bases in Saudi Arabia on 19 January 1991, the alarms sounded. Troops were told the alarms had been falsely activated, although a team of Czech chemical weapons experts working for the Saudis have since said that their equipment showed positive for mustard gas.

The MoD still maintains, however, that chemical weapons were not used during the Gulf war, although they were released during the destruction of an Iraqi weapons dump.

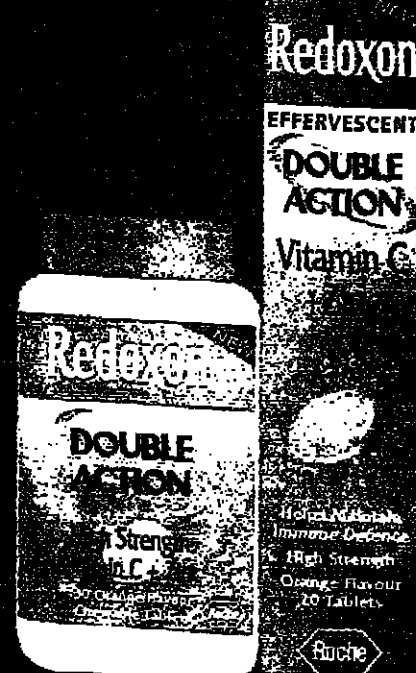
When the Khamsiyah pit was detonated by the Americans on 10 March 1991, gases from up to 500 Iraqi chemical rockets were wafted a distance of up to 450km. Military sources said last week that they did not expect President Saddam Hussein to use chemical and biological weapons in a conflict because of possible American response to such an action.

British forces have not been vaccinated or made to take tablets against chemical and biological attacks, although medication has been sent to the Gulf as an emergency measure.

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US troops descend on Kuwait

By Raymond Whitaker
in Kuwait City

THE FIRST of 6,000 additional American troops being sent to Kuwait, "Dogfaces" of the Third Infantry Division, descended in desert fatigues from a chartered Boeing 747 yesterday. The message from their commander was straightforward: "We're here to defend Kuwait."

Their ability to perform that role was emphasised by the sight of hundreds of tanks and armoured vehicles at Camp Doha, the US base in Kuwait normally occupied by only 1,500 troops.

But if Lieutenant-General Tommy Franks, commander of the Third US Army, or his soldiers ever get the chance to speak to any Kuwaitis, they will find that the latest crisis in the Gulf has exposed all the ambiguities this country feels about its dependence on the West and its position in the Arab world.

Kuwait is virtually alone in allowing its soil to be used for a possible attack on Iraq, and many fear that fellow Arabs will blame them for anything which worsens the suffering of Saddam Hussein's subjects. Uneasiness about possible retaliation, which has brought calls for preparedness and a rush by some to buy gas masks, is matched by a sense of isolation.

Some of the most Westernised Kuwaitis, such as Ahmad Bishara, an engineer who leads the liberal National Democratic Movement, have few doubts. "Many of us were disappointed by the reaction of our neighbours in 1990 and 1991, when we suffered seven months of Iraqi occupation," he said. "Countries like Syria and Egypt would never have come to our aid without the Americans. We emerged wishing that we weren't in this part of the world."

"As a Kuwaiti I don't feel any guilt or shame when we ask for assistance. It is pure and simple self-defence against an unpredictable enemy with a long history of deceit and aggression. None of us wants a military solution, but we are tired of the threat from Saddam Hussein, and we want to get it over with. That does not make us warmongers."

Even Naser al-Sane, a Shia Muslim member of the National Assembly who is one of

Mr Bishara's bitterest conservative opponents, did not disagree with him. "We are 100 per cent for a peaceful solution," he said. "But if Iraq doesn't comply it will be responsible for the consequences. Kuwaitis believe they are hosting troops as part of an international coalition applying United Nations resolutions."

When Kuwaitis are talking among themselves rather than for international consumption, however, much less certainty is apparent. At a political meeting in the home of Sami al-Monayyes, the leading liberal in the National Assembly, the undesirability of the Western presence in the region was taken for granted. "Saddam gives others a reason to interfere," the MP complained. "Why are all these US weapons here? Because we Arabs created this problem - it wasn't imposed from outside."

Others disagreed. "The Americans are playing a big game against all Arabs," said one member of his audience. "They are using Saddam as a means of blackmailing the Gulf countries. The danger comes from them as well as him. They are not just here to protect Kuwait. They have a step-by-step approach - first it was protecting Saudi Arabia, then it was liberating Kuwait, now they are seeking to intervene militarily in Iraq."

Mr al-Monayyes, seeking to persuade his listeners that lack of respect for human rights was at the root of instability in the Arab world, replied that "our regimes will look like puppets of the West" while they lacked legitimacy. "Our decisions are very dependent on theirs - we don't feel independent."

Some speakers pointed out that the US was much less willing to hold Israel to UN resolutions on the occupied territories, but the Palestinian cause is the subject of further ambiguity in Kuwait.

Once there were more Palestinians here than Kuwaiti citizens, but most were expelled after being accused of sympathising with the Iraqis during the occupation. Several alleged collaborators were tortured and killed. "The Zionists' main preoccupation is the Palestinians, as the Iraqis are ours," the MP said uncomfortably, trying to get back to his theme.



Waiting game: A father puts his arm around his son during training for volunteers on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital Baghdad yesterday as US troop reinforcements arrived in neighbouring Kuwait. Photograph: Darko Bantic/AP

Media wizards battle for hearts and minds

By Nicholas von Herberstein

The US is sending special equipment to the Gulf that will enable it to jam Iraqi television broadcasts and beam its own programmes.

The equipment is part of the elite US Army 4th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne), which has been sent to Kuwait to support the Brigade Task Force, 3rd Infantry Division. The 4th Psychological Operations Group received their deployment orders on 16 February and are on their way. Composed of elite airborne-qualified soldiers, the 4th Group is permanently based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which is also home to the John F Kennedy Special Warfare Centre and the US Army Special Forces. Trained over a number of years, the Psychological Operations, or Psyops, are expert media specialists.

Among the various methods used, such as production and distribution of leaflets, and material for broadcast, they also employ the controversial Mobile Broadcast Unit, which was used in Bosnia.

"The MBU, code named Commander Solo, is a C-130 transport plane equipped to send television and radio signals into the homes of people," said John Thompson, Public Affairs Liaison for US Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command. "The group will also print newspapers in the local language to provide a clear message to the people why the US forces are there."

Psyops established itself during the Gulf war, saving countless of coalition force lives by convincing Iraqi soldiers to surrender.

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US right wingers held over germ war plot

TWO members of a US white separatist group have been arrested in Nevada and accused of plotting a bacterial attack on the New York City subway, an FBI source said yesterday.

The source, who spoke in New York on condition of anonymity, gave no other details. The FBI in Nevada said only that two men, members of the Aryan Nation, were taken into custody in a luxury car outside a doctor's office in Henderson, Nevada.

Nevada FBI spokesman Aurelio Flores said the car, a white Mercedes, was taken to Nellis Air Force Base for evaluation. Mr Flores said the FBI had secured the area where the car was found and had "made

everything safe". He said the agency was not looking for explosives.

Mr Flores said later yesterday that the men arrested in Nevada "were trying to be, maybe, copycats of what happened in Japan".

In Tokyo in 1995, a Japanese doomsday cult was blamed for a nerve gas attack on that city's subway system. Nineteen people were killed in the subway attack and another nerve gas attack in the central Japanese town of Matsumoto in 1994. The victims died after inhaling or having skin contact with sarin, a poisonous gas.

Referring to the two men arrested yesterday, Mr Flores said: "They might have

talked about different cities... we have no conclusive evidence to indicate that they were talking about a specific city. It was loose talk. The important thing is that everything is safe."

Broadcast reports in Las Vegas and Ohio said one of the two men was Larry Wayne Harris. Last year, Harris, of Lancaster, Ohio, pleaded guilty on a charge of fraud after he was accused of illegally obtaining bubonic plague bacteria through the mail from a laboratory in 1995. He said he never intended to hurt anyone and was sentenced to 18 months' probation. Bubonic plague can be fatal, although it is treatable with antibiotics.

In Washington, a federal law enforcement source said agents were investigating allegations that the two men arrested in Las Vegas possessed anthrax. The source stressed that the tests were not complete and that there have been unfounded instances in the past involving allegations of anthrax. Anthrax is an infectious disease that usually affects only animals, but it can be produced in a dry form suitable for weapons and even microscopic quantities can be fatal.

The New York source said the suspects allegedly planned to release a "dangerous bacterial substance" in the subway system, the fifth-busiest in the world.

However, the Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, later denied that the city had been targeted. Mr Giuliani, speaking generally about the threat of terrorism, said: "Every part of America, every part of the world, is vulnerable to terrorism... there is no way to make an open society, a democracy, invulnerable to terrorism or to criminal acts. Short of closing down America and closing down the city of New York, it would be impossible to do that."

The Mayor added: "It is impossible to have a police officer [in] every place. That would be unrealistic, and it would change the nature of a free society. Short of that, I think New York City is doing everything

it can do to try to reduce the risk." Terrorism came to New York in 1993 when Islamic militants bombed the World Trade Center, killing six people and injuring 1,000. Militants also were convicted of planning further bombings at key river crossings and other high-profile targets. US right-wingers were convicted in the 1995 bombing of a federal office building in Oklahoma City, which killed 168 people.

New York City's 722-mile subway system drew 1.13 billion fares last year - surpassing the Paris Metro to become the fifth-busiest underground railway in the world.

— New York (AP)

German find cause to celebrate Emu figures

By Imre Karacs
in Bonn

PLANS to launch the European single currency next year received a fillip from calculations published yesterday, showing that Germany has comfortably attained the most important Maastricht criterion.

According to estimates prepared by the German Institute of Economic Forecasting and the Bundesbank, Germany's budget deficit amounted last year to about DM100bn, or roughly 2.8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

Although the figure may still change slightly, experts appear certain that the figure will not exceed the 3 per cent limit laid down by the Maastricht treaty. Final figures will be released by the government's Statistical Office next Friday. Their publication will swing the debate about economic and monetary union in favour of those backing the euro.

The new numbers, contradicting economic forecasts throughout last year, will be a welcome relief to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who suffered a series of blows in recent weeks from German Euro-sceptics.

After years of silent grumbling, a movement of Germans

opposed to Emu has been gathering momentum.

Opinion polls show that two-thirds of German voters are sceptical about the euro, though their sentiments have yet to be exploited by any political party in this election year.

Meeting the magic 3.0 target is likely to silence the most powerful critic, Prime Minister Edmund Stoiber of Bavaria, who has questioned Europe's readiness to proceed with the greatest monetary project in its history.

The government's success in balancing the books will also derail the campaign of four leading economists, who have taken their case to Germany's Constitutional Court. Much of their legal argument rests on claims that the German government has failed to put its house in order.

Only one of the four criteria will not be met. Germany's public debt will bust the Maastricht limit of 60 per cent, but Bonn's European partners have accepted the argument that this is due to costs incurred in eastern Germany.

The final arbiter of economic performance will be the Bundesbank, which is to present its assessment of Emu at a cabinet meeting in the mid-



Happy days: Clowns celebrating Weiberfastnacht, the first day of the street carnival in down-town Cologne

Photograph: Roland Wehrauch/AP

dle of next month. The expected positive verdict from Frankfurt will be rubber-stamped by the government, and put to a vote in the two houses of the German Parliament on 23 and 24 April.

So far so good. The problem confronting all 11 prospective members of Emu is that both the Bundesbank and the German parliament have taken it upon themselves to judge not only Germany's merits, but

also those of every other applicants. Thus, with the pressure off Germany, the focus is set to shift towards countries with more questionable credentials.

Step forward Italy. With a public debt ratio twice as high as allowed, and boasting a quarter of the European Union's debt burden, Italian finances are unlikely to receive a clean bill of health from the Bundesbank. If Frankfurt produces a

scathing report about Italy, Chancellor Kohl will disregard it only at his peril. As sceptics never cease to point out, the strength or weakness of the new currency is determined by the weakest link in the chain.

In brief

Denmark calls early election

Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen called an early general election for 11 March to clear the air before a referendum. The Social Democrats' Mr Rasmussen, called the election six months before he has to, and 11 weeks before a poll on the European Union's Amsterdam treaty. — Reuters, Copenhagen

UN kidnap

Kidnappers seized four United Nations military observers in the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Police tracked down and surrounded the heavily armed gang, who demanded the freedom of seven people arrested after last week's failed attempt to kill President Eduard Shevardnadze. — AP, Tbilisi

Serbia's PM

Serbian President Milan Milutinovic appointed incumbent Prime Minister Mirko Marjanovic to head the new government. Both are members of the ruling Socialist party (SPS) and close allies of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. — Reuters, Belgrade

Burma talks

The ageing leader of the rebel Karen National Union, Bo Mya, is seeking fresh peace talks with Burma's military rulers to end a 50-year war for an autonomous ethnic Karen state. — Reuters, Thakaykwee

Torture claims

A human rights group accused Gambia of harassing opposition activists and journalists and called for an independent inquiry into alleged torture. "The transition to civilian rule may be over in Gambia but the transition to respect for democratic and human rights is not," Article 19 said in a report. — Reuters, London

Valentine orgy

Outraged at the spectacle of young people kissing in a street-car, the Greek Catholic Church in Romania asked the government to quash Valentine's Day celebrations. "This is a profanation of a martyr of virtue and chastity," Tertulian Langa, a Greek Catholic priest, said. "His name has been turned into a public orgy." — AP, Bucharest

Le Pen faces day of judgment over election street battle

By John Lichfield
in Paris

IT WAS the liveliest moment in a dull election campaign. By good luck, I was there; by bad luck, I missed the most important incident. As a consequence, I was not giving evidence either for or against Jean-Marie Le Pen yesterday when he appeared in a French court accused, in effect, of causing a public affray.

The scene was the small

town of Mantes-la-Jolie, in the Seine valley west of Paris, two days before the second round of the French general election last May. The National Front leader was there to support his daughter, Marie-Caroline, who topped the poll locally in the first round.

It is alleged that Mr Le Pen seized the Socialist candidate, and the mayor of a nearby town, Annette Puivast-Bergeal, by her mayoral sash and screamed in her face. Pic-

tures exist to prove this happened; unfortunately, my view was blocked at the crucial moment by a wrestling scrum of FN security guards and anti-FN protesters.

I can report - because I was standing next to him for extended periods - that Mr Le Pen was in a thoroughly aggressive mood that day, even by his offensive standards. He deliberately bounded out of his limousine into the midst of the crowd of opponents. During the

ensuing 90-minute riot, which moved up and down the high street like one of those ancient football matches played in small British towns, he chased and punched protesters on two occasions. Whenever the fighting died down, it was Mr Le Pen who steered the FN marchers around the outnumbered riot police and into the pack of demonstrators.

He boasted to his daughter, as I was shoved right up against them: "This is nothing to me.

I was in the paratroop regiment of the Foreign Legion. I've seen worse than this."

On the other hand, it was evident that the protesters were equally spoiling for a fight. Eleven of them also appeared in court in Versailles yesterday alongside Mr Le Pen and three of his body guards.

The National Front leader and his cohorts are accused of causing a public affray and using insulting behaviour. The protesters are accused of con-

spiring violently to impede freedom of political assembly.

All face fines of up to £30,000 and, in theory, three years in prison. The trial will end today though judgment may be reserved.

Mr Le Pen sent his personal popularity to a new low of 14 per cent late last year by repeating his assertion that the extermination of Jews in Nazi gas-chambers was merely a "detail" of the Second World War.



Jean-Marie Le Pen 'saw worse in the Foreign Legion'

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He's got millions, but has he got taste?

It's easy to poke fun at Prince Jefri of Brunei, but for the seriously rich, decorating the dining room can be a tricky business. Kate Watson-Smyth goes through the keyhole



Goldfingered: Prince Jefri of Brunei and some of his made-to-order belongings

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

SOLD TAPS or chrome taps? Persian rugs or shagpile carpet? Repro hi-fi cabinets or Louis Quinze chairs? Who's to say what is in good taste or what is simply "not done"? There are as many opinions on what constitutes good taste as there are coffee tables in the Conran Shop. Or to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw: "It is impossible for an Englishman to show off his living room without making some other Englishman hate or despise him."

But while the debate on defining good taste is older than the Elgin Marbles, these days there are certain commonly held principles on what is considered to be bad taste.

The first of these is ostentation. Although there is nothing intrinsically wrong with spending large amounts of money on the contents of one's home, in England at least, it must not appear too obvious.

Two men who have yet to learn that lesson about the English are the Scot sitting on the Woolsack, Lord Irvine of Lairg, and the Sultan of Brunei's brother, Prince Jefri.

The Lord Chancellor has incurred the criticism of Tory MPs and the disdain of those who loathe vulgar spending with the refurbishment of his official residence. More than £650,000 has been spent on soft furnishings, decoration and furniture, including handprinted wallpaper at £60,000. Lord Irvine, who once likened himself to Lord Wolsey, has ordered himself a Pugin-style 16-seat oak dining table, costing £9,640. Light fittings are put at £56,000. £5,000 is going on ceramic tiles. £5,000 on blinds and £11,000 on "domestic equipment" and tableware.

In Brunei, meanwhile, if you've got it, you must flaunt it. Prince Jefri, a man who can spend without limit in the pursuit of opulence, has opted for naked ostentation. His (several) homes are piled high with solid gold statues and tables encrusted with jewels. He is said to have paid \$7m for a bedside rug woven from solid gold thread and studded with 25,000 precious gems. Not the sort of thing you'll find in Ikea.

When photographs of these items were published in newspapers last week, accompanying reports of a court dispute over business deals involving the prince, there were gasps of horror across England. A common reaction was "all that money and look at that. Has he no taste?"

Indeed, as Lucy Elworthy, decoration editor of *House & Garden*, says: "The British have always been anti vulgarity and there is something very vulgar about ostentation and having things dripping with diamonds. Good taste tends to be un-

derstated - and that remains timeless. It varies slightly through the ages, but I think that what was considered good taste 40 years ago is properly still considered good taste now."

She is also convinced that good taste is innate. "You either have it or you don't and you cannot learn it. You can try to improve bad taste by looking at magazines, but you have to understand what you are doing. You have to know about antiques and paintings and understand why they are beautiful and why they work well in a space."

So, good taste is about understated timeless elegance. But where does that leave "retro-chic"? In certain design circles, items from the 1970s - once labelled the decade that taste forgot - are about as cutting edge as it's possible to be.

Ms Elworthy maintains that although a lava lamp might be fashionable, that does not make an item of good taste.



Lavish living: Lord Irvine and David Sullivan



"Most people would still maintain that the 1970s revival is in bad taste but because it is fashionable at the moment it has now been labelled *kitsch* and become desirable - but it will never be called good taste."

According to the style pundits, the second biggest mistake a householder can make is to plump for reproduction furniture - however expensive or well made.

David Sullivan would take issue with that. The owner of Birmingham City Football Club and the *Sunday Sport*, proud owner of a £6m mansion in Essex, is said to be wounded by accusations that his home re-

sembles Versailles decorated by Liberate.

"There are no antiques. If you have something very valuable, you're frightened of it being stolen, frightened of breaking it," he says.

"People say it's all repro rubbish, but if this room was genuine antiques it would be half-a-million-quiet and you'd be frightened of sitting on it."

And Mr Sullivan has an unlikely ally in Celestia Noel, the outgoing social editor of *Harpers & Queen*. "Modern good taste tends towards the restrained but historically that was not the case," she argues.

"There was nothing restrained about Blenheim Palace which is very opulent - it was meant to look fantastic and impress people. They may have thought it was terribly bad taste at the time but now it is much admired and it maybe that in time people will come to love such extravagance."

"I would have actually like to defend bad taste. It can be a real shame to be restrained all the time and it is just snobbery to look down on excessive spending."

Indeed, Drusilla Beyfus, author of *Modern Manners*, and an expert on etiquette, feels that to remark that someone has good taste is in itself, bordering on the insulting.

"It is less to do with taste than to do with what is and what is not acceptable which may or may not be bad taste. If you say someone has good taste it is slightly perjorative, as if you think of them as being bland and safe."

Ms Beyfus says she would welcome gold taps in her bathroom. "If I could afford it and it was a beautiful and a minimalist gold tap then I would willingly have it."

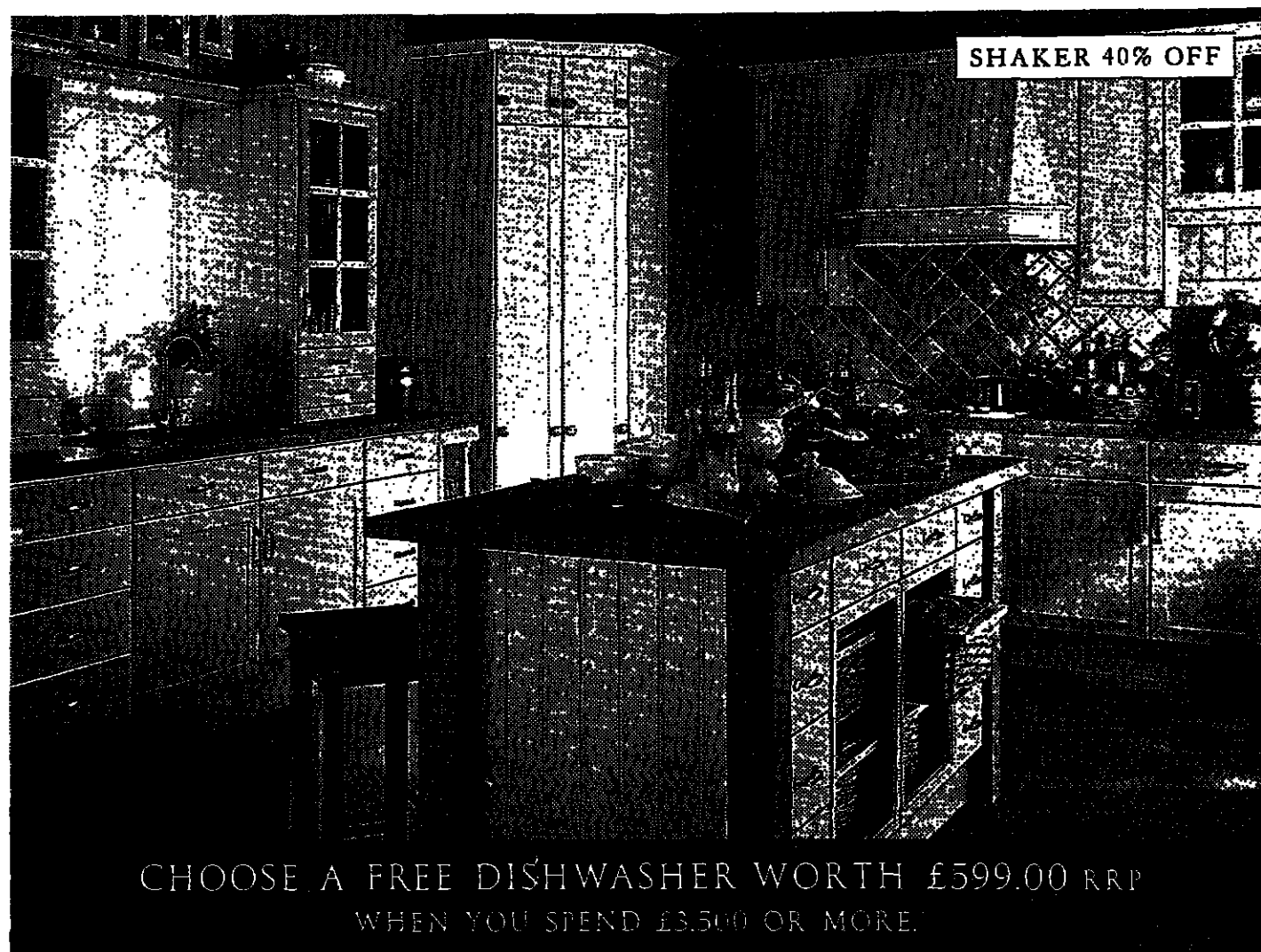
Peter York, the style guru, is similarly reluctant to accept such rigid definitions of taste.

"There are no fixed standards now and fewer people are aiming for good taste. They want fun taste and individual taste. There are certain group reactions, and left to their devices people from the same social groups will fix up their houses in the same way - but that is part of conditioning."

"Taste is taken to be restraint and 'pleasing decay' and the assumption is that people who furnish their houses in this way have good taste, but there is no longer a dominant establishment taste."

And for those who agree that good taste is to be found in 'pleasing decay', one man seems to have got it right. The Lord Chancellor's Cabinet colleague and fellow Scot, Gordon Brown, has gone back to basics in one of the grandest entertaining rooms at 11 Downing St - bare floorboards.

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IND 21

Young lives under the gun



In Saddam's shadow: Hannah and Matthew Cullimore aboard HMS Belfast

Photograph: John Voss

YOU could hear them talking about Saddam aboard HMS Belfast yesterday – the children taken by their parents to the Second World War battleship docked by London Bridge, as a half-term treat. But war is no longer a history lesson for youngsters, or part of an outing to a museum. Suddenly, the threat of it is closer to home, and children are becoming fearful.

Among the youngsters on the Belfast were Robert Piper, 12, and his brother Thomas, 9. They do not want a war with Iraq. "I have heard that there are soldiers in the Gulf," said Robert. "They have gone over the desert to stop Saddam Hussein blowing us up. When I heard that I was worried it would come here."

With newspapers and television headlines full of the latest developments in the Gulf, children have started to hear more and more mention of war, of bombing, and perhaps most frightening of all, of germ warfare.

While adults may find all the details and the political brinkmanship hard to follow, children find it baffling. They catch snippets of news, hear talk of a despot, and have no concept of distance. To them, Iraq is close at hand.

But for children familiar with action-packed films and cartoons, the idea of war can be also exciting. Children like the Pipers are fascinated by it, which was why their father Chris took them to the Belfast.

Anne Cullimore, from Crawley in Surrey, brought her children Matthew, 8, and Hannah, 6, to see the ship after they had been talking about the Gulf crisis. "My husband and my mother-in-law were talking about the Gulf and Matthew overheard them," she said. "My mother-in-law started to tell him about her own experiences in the Second World War and he was

It's not just politicians who are talking about Saddam Hussein. As Jack O'Sullivan and Rosa Prince discover, children are finding it hard to cope with the threat of war

interested, so I brought them here today". For parents used to awkward questions, the military build-up in the Gulf can nevertheless pose a particularly difficult issue for discussion. Carolyn Douglas is director of Exploring Parenthood, which operates a helpline for parents seeking advice on what to tell their children, and believes: "There is an almost hedonistic, sexualised excitement around the idea that we're going to get Saddam Hussein. But for some children, this type of excitement is also a shield against being frightened."

'There's talk about nuclear weapons and germ warfare and whether he'd use them'

Nat Jenkins, from Clapham, south London, is 13-years-old and says war is very much on the minds of his friends. "We don't generally discuss the Gulf with teachers," he says. "But we do talk to each other about it quite a lot. It comes up in conversation. It is becoming such a big thing. There is a lot of talk about Saddam Hussein having nuclear weapons and germ warfare, and whether he would use them here. We can't really predict what is going to happen but you can't spend your time getting freaked out about it."

There is, however, an air of curious an-

tipication in Nat's voice as he discusses the prospects of war. "I was pretty young but I remember seeing the original Gulf war," he recalls. "My mum told me to watch it on the television and I remember thinking 'wow!'"

"The crucial mix that parents need to achieve, is 'constancy, consistency and containment,'" says Carolyn Douglas. "Grown-ups have to act grown-up and contain their own anxieties and their bullish behaviour. As with sex education, it's about telling children as much as they can cope with and not letting rip with your own fears. So you may not offer full information about what is happening but you make sure that they have a few facts that a child can hang on to. If children are given no knowledge then they will imagine that the bombs are coming tonight, that they are going to get anthrax up their noses immediately."

Typical of the fearful child is Lydia Whitaker, 11, from Kentish Town in north London. "At school," she says, "some stupid children have been going around saying, 'Did you know World War Three's going to break out on Friday?' They say Saddam Hussein already has some weapons. If they bomb Iraq won't he be tempted to use them? It sort of frightens me."

Awareness of problems in the Gulf starts young. "From about five, many children know something is happening," says Carolyn Douglas. "But the seven to 11-year-olds ask the most profound questions. You should be prepared to deal with questions such as: Is Saddam evil? Could this be the

end of the world? Are lots of people going to get killed?"

"So you give them realistic reassurance. You tell them that no one knows if people will be killed. We certainly hope not. The UN man is trying to sort it out. But this thing is a bit tricky. It's wise to use language which is quite light but not lying."

Fear is, however, probably greatest, among the children of service personnel. "They are bombarded by the media attention," says Ray Swindley, director of social work for the Soldiers', Sailors' and

'Some children have been asking if I know World War Three's going to break out'

Airmen's Families Association. "The children are fully aware of what is going on. They hear dire predictions. And if they are with their mother, then she is anxious as well. So they have to cope with that too. You have to help them by acknowledging the stresses that they are under. You can't just say everything will be fine. At least if they are in a garrison, then everyone supports each other."

Those who care for children remember how some reacted during the last conflict in 1991. "They were worried that they were going to be attacked themselves, that a

bomb was going to land on their house," recalls one junior school teacher. "Children have no concept of distance. And they get worried about what happens to children in other places. Sometimes, they can also become very aggressive, gung-ho, not understanding the consequences of violence. In many ways they mimic their parents' views. Last time, it became difficult for Middle Eastern children. They felt threatened and were bullied."

Chris Piper is convinced that it is vital to talk to his two sons. "When we see it on the news," he says, "we have a chat about it. It is good to explain it to them. I like Robert and Thomas to have an unbiased view as far as possible."

Marshall Corwin understands the need to give children reliable information. He is deputy editor of *Newsround*, BBC TV's weekday service for children. "In the last Gulf war," he recalls, "we did a special programme explaining the reasons behind the conflict. We looked at the range of Saddam's Scuds and explained that children here would not be affected. And we examined the impact of the war on children of all sides. We don't unduly alarm children, but we think there are very few issues that we cannot raise with them."

Carolyn Douglas believes it may be necessary for adults to manage children's exposure to television. "Some children can become obsessed," she says. "With them, one might say that between, say, 4pm and 5pm, you will listen to their worries but outside those hours you don't want to talk about the conflict and that the child should forget about it. This is one way to release children from feeling guilty. It lets them get on with their lives."

Exploring Parenthood's helpline is 0171 221 6681

Accidental love of a bigamist

"I AM NOT a man-eating bigamist," Hayley Bates told reporters outside Portsmouth Crown Court on Wednesday. Clearly what she meant was that she was some other form of bigamist as opposed to a man-eating one, since she had just received a three-month suspended sentence for perjury, after failing to reveal that she was already married when she wed Stephen Perry, a sailor on the Royal yacht *Briarion*. Indeed, she had been married for more than two years to Andrew Bates, who was also formerly a sailor on *Briarion* and is now a stoker on HMS *Quorn*.

Mrs Bates considers herself more of an accidental bigamist than a man-eating one, claiming that she "genuinely believed" she was divorced. Nevertheless, the case raises a couple of interesting questions. For instance, why has the Navy begun naming its ships after vegetarian meat substitutes? And more pertinently, how many different sorts of bigamist are there? Study recent court cases and you quickly realise that the practice is far more common than one might imagine in an age when increasing numbers of couples choose to live together and raise a family without ever troubling the local registrar. The Archbishop of Canterbury would no doubt be pleased to see that there is still a significant body of individuals who apparently believe so firmly in marriage that they're willing to keep more than one on the go at the same time.

In fact, idleness seems to be the key in most cases. "I think one of the main reasons people commit bigamy is probably because it's easier to get married than it is to get unmarried," says Dr Glenn Wilson, a psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. "Very often the original marriage has collapsed long ago. They've separated

TIM HULSE

and lost contact with their original spouse and maybe they think it's easier to go ahead and get married and nobody will notice that they've been married once before."

Perhaps the record-breaker in this category in recent times has been Pat Hinton, who managed to commit bigamy at four of her 10 weddings and served a year in prison as a result. She claimed she was "just looking for love and security". Her 10 husbands included six soldiers, although she has now been happily married for several years to a telecommunications engineer.

Then there are further bigamy sub-groups, and these illustrate a difference between the sexes. "Male bigamy is more likely to be sexually motivated, a form of sexual exploitation," says Dr Wilson. "You'll find a man operating two families in parallel and shuffling backwards and forwards between the two. It's a manifestation of a particularly male tendency to be promiscuous. It's just that he's married the second one because he figured that it would take marriage to catch her or keep her."

"Female bigamy is more likely to be one of two things. Either it's an addiction to the ritual of marriage, which is a big turn-on to women, the idea of getting dressed up in your finery and exchanging all those vows and rings and so on. Or else it's a financial exploitation, getting a string of husbands and getting money off all of them."

The case of Barbara Fruin, who was given two years' probation last June after admitting two charges of bigamy, seems to be an example of the latter. Fruin had claimed: "I only wanted to be loved. I'm blind when it comes to men and can't help falling for a bit of attention." However, the debt-ridden men she had deceived put a somewhat less romantic slant on matters.

And finally there's the forgetful bigamist. According to Dr Wilson, there's an extreme condition called "figue" where a person can simply up sticks and disappear, with apparently no memory of their former life and family. Leslie Knott was jailed for six months at the beginning of the year despite claiming that he had no record whatsoever of his first marriage and "believed at the time he was in Ipswich".

I think I know the feeling.

Don't be fooled: the New Gay may not even exist yet



JOHN LYTTLE

Hi. Lovely to see you. Fine. You? What have I been doing? I've been leafing through *The Gay Kama Sutra* and laughing like a drain. Who wouldn't? It's not just the positions, although I wouldn't advise trying them

at home and certainly not on Hampstead Heath. Or the photos of implacably groomed hunks jogging along the beach at dawn gazing adoringly into one another's capped teeth. Or the fact that the index is probably the first to list Frottage, Hepatitis B and the Gnostic Texts. It's...

It's everything. The glossy pages; the elegant design; the rich colour reproductions of Cesi, Tuke, Flandrin, Grant (Duncan, not Russell); the utter lack of stroke material. Pierce my ears and call me draughty but shouldn't something titled *The Gay Kama Sutra* make its target reader spring a woody or five?

Unfortunately, author Colin Spencer's holistic mix of body maintenance, Eastern philos-

ophy, mental health and Miss Mannered prose is primed to educate not elevate, though you can peruse suitably artistic etchings of boys doing it tenderly and ask yourself the first of many burning questions i.e. is my sex life that boring too? "The third kiss is when such tender touching of the lips has begun ... but now the head is moved a little this way and that, so a motion starts, moistened by saliva." The fourth kiss is, of course, when the pick-up is told to stop dribbling, get dressed and go, walk out the door.

Getting my drift? What we have here is less print run and more pastel propaganda; 192 touchy-feely pages marketing the New Gayness, so similar to the triumphant middle-class-

ness of New Labour, New Feminism and the New Seekers. We're talking neat, clean, well spoken and averagely hung, because we're ready to leave that sort of cliché behind, aren't we? (No.) *The Gay Kama Sutra* is for the sort of gay man who's only ever been tied up by mortgage commitments, the guy you haul home to Mama: the outlaw as in-law. He's not exactly political – he chants mantras, not slogans – but he is a nice man. A very nice man. And one horribly suspects that niceness is meant to gain him that damned elusive equality. Which isn't particularly Eastern but is terribly, terribly British.

Actually, the New Gay may not even exist. Which is to say he may not be an exploitable

market yet. But Colin – one feels one can call him Colin – has aspirations and quite possibly a middle-parting. Perhaps wishing will make the New Gay so. And how better to coax the timid wee beastie forth than with a supposed sex manual that turns out to be an etiquette guide? An etiquette guide that requests gay men to stop thinking about self self self and start thinking about ... self self self.

Now, I should be the last prim little Madam to object to any alternative to waning, whiny bar culture. Gay men should get in touch with their Inner Adult. But I have doubts that redecorating the interior world will alter the outside universe much and I worry if Colin is clear about this: "if a man is true to himself and well ed-

ucated in the arts and sciences ... he will have the respect of his society." See? Colin's Inner Adult is a wanky liberal, an old hippy, Michael Jackson: start with the man in the mirror. Colin believes if he's good, good things will flow to him. And being good here is taming and retuning selfish male sexuality. And isn't that the rage, hetero and homo. Colin says: "Seduction should be gentle and subtle; never go too far too quickly." I say: tell that to a bit of council estate rough who just wants a shag and the bus fare home.

Colin graciously nods to every lifestyle option yet mostly ignores what you might imagine he's in opposition to: the commercial scene. But, as I say, he's polite. Polite enough

to blot out the fact that like the poor the promiscuous are always with us, usually attempting to slip all eight wandering hands into your gusset. If they are to forgo fast love baby and begin regarding their bodies as temples rather than bouncy castles it behoves one to be honest about the dubious rate of exchange.

Not that anyone has to buy into it. Even if they wanted to. That bit of council estate rough not only lacks the refinement but the moola to be New Gay. This is a coffee table book and Mr Rough can't even afford the new paperback, let alone a coffee table. Or massage. Or therapy. Cheap sex really is cheap sex for him. The Fairylane Colin presumes a certain income as well as a certain outlook. He has

brave hopes for the 'better' in 'better off'. But what if you're not earning big and don't wish to be Sandra Bleedin' Bullock? What if you're having a bad hair day and society's deeply disappointed in you for not being as advertised, bitch? Doesn't New Gay set an impossible standard of behaviour? How can I achieve inner peace when I'm so bloody tense?

Let's put it this way. It's possible to be glad *The Gay Kama Sutra* comes from a mainstream publisher (Allen Unwin) and to agree with every other word: moderation in all things, shave closely, be wonderful in and out of bed. But as a breakthrough, *TKGS* is a true sign of these times: a thing that appears to be an advance but is actually a spiritual retreat.

Maurice Rickards

THE WORD ephemera, apart from its entomological sense, is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "lasting only for a day". It was Maurice Rickards who first articulated the definition now accepted by ephemerists the world over as "the minor transient documents of everyday life".

Rickards was not the first to recognise such fugitive material as the very stuff of printing, typographical and social history. Distinguished forerunners had included Samuel Pepys, whose scrapbook volumes of *Vulgaria* are preserved at his Alma Mater, Magdalene College, Cambridge; John Johnson, Printer to Oxford University, whose immense collection of printed ephemera is preserved at the Bodleian Library; and John Lewis of the Royal College of Art, author of the first major work in the field, *Printed Ephemera* (1962).

But it was Rickards who identified the need to elevate the study of ephemera into an academic discipline and, moreover, to bring together people who held in common a passionate interest in the forgotten byways of history. The seed of what was to become a worldwide movement of collectors, archivists, curators, bibliographers, typographers and scholars, as well as habitués of flea markets in anoraks, was sown in Rickards's basement studio in Fitzroy Square, London, in 1975. There eight enthusiasts, including John Lewis, met to discuss the formation of an ephemera society.

The Ephemera Society held its inaugural event later that year with an exhibition, "This is Ephemera", held at Wiggins Teape's showrooms in Soho. It comprised highlights from the collections of the eight founder members, ranging from a first-class ticket for the maiden voyage of the *Titanic* to a souvenir printed on the frozen Thames at the Frost Fair of 1740 in honour of Hogarth's dog *Trump*, from the first issue of *Punch* to a prostitute's calling card of the 1860s. It was generally acknowledged that the choicest items emanated from the Maurice Rickards Collection.

The exhibition attracted widespread attention and membership grew apace, not only in Britain but from as far afield as Iceland, Singapore, Latvia, New Zealand, Venezuela and Kenya. Under the energetic chairmanship of Rickards, and the benign presidency of Sir John Betjeman, the society catered for a wide spectrum of interests.

Some were simply accumulators of the debris of the past, to whom a complete collection of Express Dairy milk-bottle tops was the elixir of life; others, like the comedian Roy Hudd or the novelist Len Deighton, collected as a means of illuminating their specialist interests (theatrical history and airships respectively); while social historians like Asa Briggs, the society's present President, saw ephemera as significant primary source material.

All were welcomed without

distinction by Rickards, though he did assert his own standpoint on ephemera: it was valuable, he often declared, as evidence - ephemera was evidence from the past of otherwise unrecorded aspects of daily life. To Rickards an 18th-century laundry list conveyed evidence as valuable as a Royal Proclamation.

Maurice Rickards was born Maurice George Mansbridge at Twickenham in 1919. His interests and conversation being centred on anything but himself, even his closest intimates were unaware that Rickards was not the name on his birth certificate. His father, an electrical engineer, had deserted the family when the boy was four years old.

The young Rickards was brought up in Kilburn by his mother, of East European and part gypsy origin, and his stepfather, George Rickards, an ardent socialist who had led an adventurous life in Africa before establishing a business in Wembley manufacturing enamel kitchenware under the name "Easikleen". Rickards junior absorbed his stepfather's political principles, selling the *Daily Worker* on Kilburn Bridge while still in short trousers.

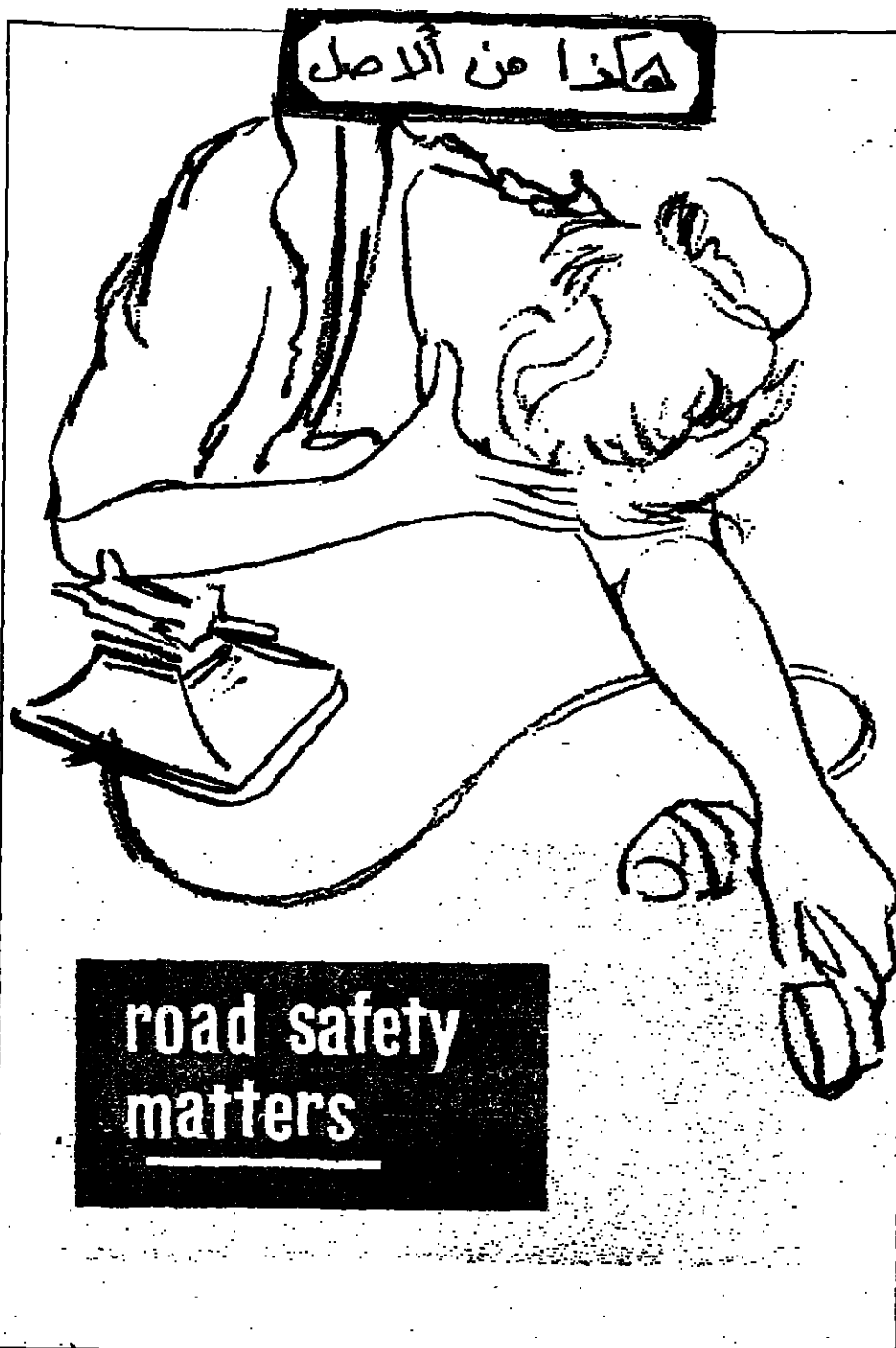
Maurice Rickards's interest in ephemera began as a strictly commercial endeavour while he was at Marylebone Grammar School. He designed a poster during Latin classes which he sold to a local grocer. Thereafter he supplemented his irregular pocket money by producing showcards and notices for other tradesmen in the area.

At the age of 16 he entered Westminster Art School, but left early to train as a photographer. The eminent portrait studio he selected for an introduction to this career was persuaded to take Rickards on when he offered to pay them 7s 6d a week and perform whatever services they decreed. These consisted, he admitted ruefully in later years, mainly of sweeping floors.

As a Conscientious Objector, Rickards spent the years of the Second World War engaged in agricultural work in the West Country and social work in the East End. He then set up his own photographic and design studio in Loudoun Mews, St John's Wood, his first important commission being the programme for the London Olympiad of 1948. Moving to Duke Street, Soho, in the 1950s, he established a reputation for



Rickards: Ephemera is valuable as evidence



Poster by Rickards for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 1955 - local authorities banned it. Reproduced in Rickards's book *Banned Posters* (1969)

his promotion of humanitarian organisations, including the London Missionary Society, the YMCA, the National Institute for the Blind and Save the Children Fund.

His influence with his clients extended beyond design. Rickards was instrumental in securing the coveted "Royal" as prefix to the Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Rospa). It was also he who persuaded the British Council of Churches Department of Inter-Church Aid & Refugee Service to change its name to the catchier Christian Aid. Less successful was his attempt to change the Department for National Savings to NatSave.

With his heart invariably in the right place, Rickards was nevertheless capable of stirring up controversy. Of all the graphic arts he most esteemed the poster, about which he wrote a number of important works. In 1955 he designed a series of three posters with the slogan "Road Safety MATTERS". The innocuous strap-line was run over visuals portraying, respectively, a woman collapsed over a telephone, a one-legged boy on crutches, and a little girl road casualty in the arms of a policeman. Each was formally banned by various local authorities. Where displayed they were subject to defacement, obliteration and harsh letters to editors and local MPs.

Rickards's studio was a haven for free spirits. Having scant regard for formal art-school training, he recruited his staff from the local Labour Exchange and trained them up to his own highly exacting stan-

dards. When work was slack the staff repaired to Regent's Park to fly kites under Rickards's tutelage; there were also impromptu games of volleyball in the studio played with rolled-up balls of Sellotape.

It was wholly characteristic of Maurice Rickards that when he decided to abandon design and photography in 1970 for a career of authorship he told the staff that the business was now theirs to do with what they would. In his basement flat in Fitzroy Square he produced a succession of works on ephemera which contributed much to scholarship but little to his pocket. While the basement contained a huge collection of books, including a 100-year run of the *Times*, there was little in the way of creature comforts. He slept on six chairs, facing each other in threes so that he would not fall on the floor.

It was here, with the chairs occupied more conventionally, that not only the society but the world-wide ephemera movement had its genesis. The early Ephemera Society had a large number of American members. In 1980, with Rickards's blessing, they seceded to become the Ephemera Society of America Inc.

He subsequently lent his active support to the setting up of ephemera societies in Canada, Australia, Austria/Germany and Norway. The Norwegians started with a dedication to sardine-can labels but were persuaded by Rickards to expand their horizons.

Unable to secure charitable status for the Ephemera Soci-

ety, Rickards established the Foundation for Ephemera Studies to encourage the serious study of ephemera. The first fruit of this initiative was the establishment of the Centre for Ephemera Studies at Reading University in 1993. Founded under the direction of Professor Michael Twyman, the centre has as its aims the creation of a full register of ephemera collections, the standardisation of cataloguing methods, and the promotion of ephemera studies in an academic context. In pursuit of the latter objective it was decided to set up an archive of ephemera which would merit international attention: the first acquisition was the Maurice Rickards Collection.

In 1977 Rickards embarked on *The Encyclopaedia of Ephemera*. More than 20 years on this monumental work remains uncompleted. The Ephemera Society is now engaged in filling the gaps in order to see the book through to publication. It will stand, they believe, as a testament to Maurice Rickards's lifelong aspiration that ephemera should be recognised for its power to invoke the past and reveal historical truth.

Patrick Hicliman Robertson

Maurice George Mansbridge (Maurice Rickards), designer, photographer, writer and ephemerist: born Twickenham, Middlesex 11 August 1919; Chairman, Ephemera Society 1975-86, Vice-President 1986-98; married 1946 Yolanda Martelli (marriage dissolved); died London 11 February 1998.

Bob Merrill

AS A composer-lyricist, Bob Merrill may not be in the exalted class of Irving Berlin, Cole Porter or Frank Loesser, but he has an important place in American popular music, both as a composer of Hit Parade material - notably with such novelty songs as "How Much is That Doggie in the Window?" and "My Truly, Truly Fair" - and as a Broadway show composer. Though he usually wrote both words and music, his biggest hit was *Funny Girl*, for which he wrote the lyrics only to Jule Styne's score.

The son of a sweet-meat manufacturer, Merrill was born in 1921 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, but raised in Philadelphia. He was educated at Temple University, then studied acting under Richard Bennett (father of the film stars Joan and Constance). He worked as a night-club singer and comedian, also touring in vaudeville before service in the Second World War, after which he hitch-hiked to Hollywood and worked as a porter before joining NBC radio as a writer. In the late 1940s he joined Columbia Pictures as a dialogue director, then moved to CBS as a television casting director.

He started composing in 1947, though he could neither read music nor play a musical instrument. He composed by tapping out melodies on a toy saxophone, using a numbering system to notate melodies, and in 1950 had his first major pop hit, "Candy and Cake", a hit recording for both Arthur Godfrey and Mandy Patinkin. It was followed by "If I Knew You Were Coming I'd've Baked a Cake" (1950) and a string of top hits for Guy Mitchell, including in 1951 alone "My Truly, Truly Fair", which sold a million records, "Belle, Belle, My Liberty Belle" and "Sparrow in the Tree Top" (which employed three melodies, two in counterpoint). British recording stars who had hits with his songs included Tony Brent with "Walkin' to Missouri" (1952) and Dickie Valentine with the lighthearted "All the Time and Everywhere" (1953).

The song he spent most of his later life trying to live down was "How Much is That Doggie in the Window", a million-selling hit for Patti Page in 1953. The following year he wrote hits for Sarah Vaughan ("Make Yourself Comfortable") and Rosemary Clooney ("Mambo Italiano"), but making the transition to theatre was not easy. In 1957 he

stated, "I've been writing musical comedy stuff for years but when producers heard I was the guy who wrote 'Doggie in the Window' they wouldn't even listen to my songs."

MGM, who owned the rights to Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, had hired Merrill to write a score for them, and in 1956 the director George Abbott heard about it. "I was filming *The Pajama Game* and Doris Day talked to me of a wonderful score Bob Merrill had written for a musical movie of *Anna Christie*, then called *She Ain't No Saint*. MGM had four different screenplays written for it, and none worked. Finally they shelved it." Abbott auditioned the score and with the producers Harold Prince, Robert Griffith and Frederick Brisson acquired it for Broadway. Though not a classic score, Merrill's songs for *New Girl in Town* (1957) served the book capably.

The first starring vehicle for Gwen Verdon after her success in *Can-Can*, the show also starred the great character actress Thelma Ritter, whom Merrill gave two catchy duets, "Flings" and "Yer My Friend, Ain'tcha". His next show was another piece of O'Neill Americana, a musical version of *Ah Wilderness* entitled *Take Me Along* (1959) which many feel is Merrill's best score as composer-lyricist, full of felicitous delights - the soft-shoe title song for the stars Walter Pidgeon and Jackie Gleason, the plaintive "Promise Me a Rose" for the spinster heroine Eileen Herlie, and Pidgeon's "Staying Young" in which he acknowledges his eternal youthfulness until in a touching reprise he admits that "everyone around me's growing old... like me".

Carnival (1961), based on the film *Lili* about a waif who falls in love with a puppeteer who can communicate tenderly only through his dolls, was a big success on Broadway, with a Hit Parade favourite in "Love Makes the World Go Round", but the show's ingenuousness seemed fey and cloying in the West End production, which was short-lived.

In 1962 Merrill bumped into the composer Jule Styne in Palm Beach. Styne had been signed to compose the score for a musical about the comedienne Fanny Brice, but was unhappy at the prospect of working with the suggested lyricist, Dorothy Fields. He asked Merrill if he would like to write some lyrics on spec. "I gave him five tunes," said Styne, "and he came back

in about four days with five lyrics - it was incredible." The lyrics included "Don't Rain on My Parade", "The Music That Makes Me Dance" and a song written to accommodate the show's then title, *A Very Special Person*. "People" became *Funny Girl*'s greatest hit (though several people, including Bob Fosse, Jerome Robbins and Carson Krimley, disliked it and wanted it removed).

Merrill's involvement with *Funny Girl* had a major repercussion when its star, Anne Bancroft, who had had a relationship with Merrill three years earlier which had ended badly, rejected the new songs. A new star was needed and the producers considered Eydie Gorme (who insisted her husband Steve Lawrence play the male lead), then Carol Burnett (who loved the role but advised them the girl had to be Jewish) before deciding to audition Barbra Streisand, who proved a sensation.

While the show was in gestation, Styne and Merrill wrote the score for an animated television special, *Mr Magoo's Christmas Carol* (1963), and Merrill was called upon to provide extra (uncredited) material to boost Jerry Herman's score for *Hello, Dolly!* (1964), writing the numbers "Elegance" and "Motherhood". *Funny Girl* opened on 26 March 1964, to acclaim for its star and its score, and was filmed four years later. Styne and Merrill wrote a new Oscar-nominated title tune for the film, hoping that Frank Sinatra would play the male lead, but the producers considered him too old. "We'd also written a great, sad ballad... called 'Sleep Baby Bunting' that Sinatra or Tony Newley could have done beautifully, but Omar Sharif, though a fine actor, cannot deliver a song and make you forget that he is not a musical entity."

In 1965 Styne and Merrill wrote a charming score for a television musical starring Liza Minnelli, *The Dangerous Christmas of Red Riding Hood*, then Merrill returned to solo composing with a Broadway show, *Henry, Sweet Henry* (1967), but this and subsequent shows, *Presbytery* (1971, with music by Styne), *Sugar* (1972, based on *Some Like It Hot*, with music by Styne) and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (which closed in preview) were not distinguished, though all had individual songs of wit, charm and beguiling melody.

In 1984, a four-character off-Broadway musical, *We're Home*, was created from 37 of Merrill's songs, and in 1990 he wrote another, *Hannah*. ... 1939, which starred Julie Wilson as a woman forced to work for the Nazis in Prague. He recently wrote book, music and lyrics for an animated television musical, *Tom Sawyer*, yet to be shown, but had become increasingly depressed by a series of debilitating illnesses and on 17 February drove his car to a lonely spot and shot himself. "Maybe my songs aren't brilliant or witty," he once said. "But people do like them... and I'd rather be writing for the people than a dozen sophisticates in an East Side night-club."

Tom Vallance

Bob Merrill, composer and lyricist: born Atlantic City, New Jersey 17 May 1921; married 1964 Dolores Marquez (marriage dissolved); 1976 Suzanne Reynolds; died Beverly Hills, California 17 February 1998.



Merrill (left) with Jule Styne

LAW REPORT: 20 FEBRUARY 1998

Entrapment by journalists mitigated sentence

Regina v Tonnesson; Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Otton, Mr Justice Wright and Mr Justice Dyson) 17 February 1998

A JUDGE, in passing sentence on a defendant who had been entrapped by journalists into supplying drugs, should have taken that entrapment into account as a mitigating factor, and should have referred to it expressly in his sentencing remarks.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of Brenda Ann Tonnesson against a sentence of 12 months' imprisonment imposed at Lewes Crown Court after she had pleaded guilty to supplying heroin, and substituted a sentence of six months' imprisonment.

The appellant, a heroin addict, had been approached in Eastbourne by a man who claimed to know her. He was accompanied by two other

men, who subsequently transpired to be a journalist and a photographer from the *News of the World*. They told the appellant that they worked for a sheikh who had told them to buy him some drugs, and asked her whether she would get them some heroin. They gave her £50 and she bought four wraps of heroin, and gave them to the men.

Immediately after that an article appeared in the *News of the World*, identifying the appellant by name and by a photograph. The police interviewed the appellant, who readily admitted the offence. As a result of the article the appellant was assaulted by a member of the drug fraternity in Eastbourne, and received a threat to her life.

Jane Humphreys (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant.

Lord Justice Otton said that the appellant, who suffered

from ill-health, had two convictions for minor drugs offences, but none for supplying drugs. It had been submitted on her behalf that the judge had failed to refer to the involvement of an *agere provocateur* and appeared not to have taken that into account. Although it was legitimate for police officers to entrap criminals, even in those circumstances some mitigation of the sentence was possible. Where, however, the entrapment was by journalists, even more weight and consideration should be given to that factor.

There was substance in those submissions. There could be no doubt that the appellant's behaviour had merited an immediate custodial sentence. The only question was whether the judge had given full weight to the particular circumstances in which the offence had been committed.

The fact that the appellant

had been set up to commit the offence could not be ignored. She had been tempted by the journalists to obtain and to supply the drug to them. As a result of their blandishments she had been led into committing her first offence of supplying drugs. Had the men been police officers, that would have mitigated the sentence.

Different considerations must, however, apply where the tempters were investigative journalists. In the present case the journalists had proceeded with the purpose of discovering the nature and extent of the drugs scene in Eastbourne and exposing it in their newspaper. That purpose was perfectly honourable, but the public might well be left with a sense of unease that it had been necessary to go to such lengths, identifying the appellant by name and photograph so that the police were obliged to

bring her to justice, and so that she was exposed to humiliation and threats.

Those were consequences which were most unfortunate, and in fairness to the journalists were wholly unforeseen. However, it was appropriate to reflect the element of entrapment in the case, and the unusual and exceptional circumstances which followed from it. It was clear from *R v Mackey and Shaw* (1993) 14 Cr App R (S) 53 that the matter should have been mentioned expressly in the sentencing remarks so that the public could have been assured that the entrapment by journalists had been properly reflected in the sentence imposed.

In the exceptional circumstances of the case, coupled with the appellant's obvious state of ill-health, there was room for the court to reduce the sentence substantially.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

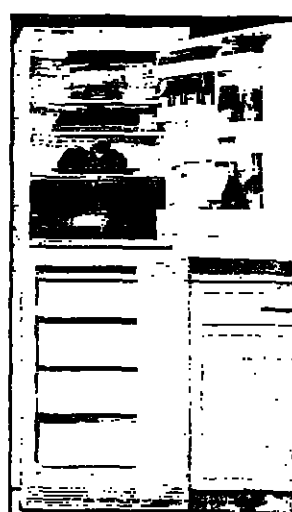
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Stop sitting on the fence, Tony, and stand up for townies



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BRITAIN is an urban country. Its wealth is generated in towns and cities; there most of its people live and there they form their identity. Yet for them, still, the "countryside" is a strong and attractive idea. The reality is hugely mixed. For townspeople, it offers leisure. The native industry, agriculture, is one that pollutes and destroys. Large tracts of the country landscape are half-built, neither identifiably rural nor urban. Within the countryside there is a great diversity of forms of life. Is a village most of whose inhabitants decamp to the nearby town to shop and work and go to school country? Is a topography cherished and paid for by the tax money of townies really classifiable as rural?

It makes no sense to pit town and country against one another in some Manichean opposition. Yet the illusion of two nations suits the propagandists. When the Countryside March sets out in London in a fortnight it will be a clever attempt by a specific interest group (the fox

hunters) to pretend that villagers worried about their shops and services, ramblers avid for access, NIMBYs who don't like new semis at the bottom of their street and the rest really do have a common cause. The "countryside movement" has a politics and, you guessed, it tilts right. These people in well-tailored headscarves, guns in hand, brandishing their beef on the bone are not progressive-minded modernisers. Beware mistaking a motley crew who cannot adjust to the fact that Labour won the last election for a broad-based expression of non-urban opinion.

Sadly, though, the Labour government seems desperate not to offend this same collection of baying voices. Poor Bernard Donoghue, junior agriculture minister, has apparently been ordered to don his Barbour and march in solidarity with the backwoodsmen. Pity John Prescott: No 10 has recently batted him back and forward like a shuttlecock, trying to avoid hard decisions on planning for housing and, now, the

"right to roam". As for fox-hunting ... There are good reasons - we think - why legislation to ban fox-hunting would be an unacceptable intrusion by the state: it is the supreme test of a liberal society that it can maintain buffers of tolerance around activities which large numbers, even a majority dislike. But you have not heard powerful arguments either way from the Blair government. Ministers and their acolytes hint that it will hamstring the Foster (private member's) Bill yet still seek to introduce its own anti-fox-hunting amendment later, and this for the very poor reason that they have not yet girded their loins to deal with the Tory and aristocratic bias in the second chamber of Parliament.

Worst of all is Labour's fence-sitting on the right to roam - its promise to put an end once for all to those "trespassers will be prosecuted" notices on tracts of land where the only trespassers are walkers and birdwatchers whose love of the open air, the fields and the moors far exceeds the

commitment of lordly and exploitative landowners to sustain the countryside. It needs to be said, straightaway, that across much of England, Scotland and Wales walkers do not have too much of a problem. The work in recent years of district and county councils, other public authorities and the National Trust in signposting and waymarking is a huge achievement. The countryside is, as a result, much more civilised. Problems occur in pockets, in parts of upland England, with certain landowners; privatisation of the utilities and commercialisation of the national forests have not helped. Whether a new statute is needed to deal with access (as opposed to local pacts with local authorities and ramblers' groups) is arguable. But Labour fatally lacks political imagination if it does not recognise the potent symbolism of aligning itself with a popular freedom movement, which is what the ramblers and the townsfolk out for some country air indeed are.

Besides, Labour made a firm commitment to the electorate. The longer the delay, the more suspicions grow. Could it be that the Prime Minister, who evidently takes some pleasure from proximity to the plutocracy, has been nobbled by landowners? Or could it be Mr Blair's sincere but unrealistic ambition of being loved by one and all that prevents him doing things that might get crowds marching down Whitehall?

They are marching anyway. Power, Labour needs to see, can be uncomfortable. Sometimes you have to tell selfish people they will have to give up some fraction of their quality of life so that others can have a better life (this is what is at stake in providing development land to meet the shortage of affordable new homes). It may involve instructing landowners that they, too, must share space. Some conflicts of interest are irreducible. Modern British government has no choice but to choose the urban way.

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LETTERS

Iraq's arms suppliers

IN his carefully crafted speech to the House of Commons on Iraq on 17 February, the Foreign Secretary chose to quote the words of the UNSCOM chairman Richard Butler: "Saddam avoids answering questions and prevents UNSCOM from finding the answers". But ministers in Robin Cook's own department are equally reticent to share their knowledge of who provided the Iraqi dictatorship with its deadly weapons.

The junior foreign minister Tony Lloyd said in a written answer on 9 February that "British manufactured equipment has been found at a number of sites inspected by UNSCOM and the IAEA. Any evidence of wrongdoing is investigated and, if appropriate, will be a matter for the courts".

On 16 February, another Foreign Office minister, Derek Fatchett, declined to provide a list of the British companies whose names had been found by the UN inspectors on military equipment in Iraq used in Saddam Hussein's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programme, saying he had "nothing to add".

One of the recurring themes of the Scott Inquiry into arms exports to Iraq was the number of times Parliament had been misinformed and under-informed by Conservative ministers, in what amounted to a persistent cover-up by the Conservative government. In the parliamentary debate on the Scott Report two years ago this month Robin Cook rightly castigated Conservative ministers for their massive failure to keep Parliament properly informed. Perhaps he might consider again his department's refusal to name the British suppliers of the Iraqi dictator's deadly arsenal.

Dr DAVID LOWRY

Stoneleigh, Surrey

IT has finally come out in the open. The US may decide to attack Iraq if that suits its "national interests" ("Go-ahead for peace mission", 18 February), regardless of whether this is consistent with what has been decided by UN resolutions, or in fact with international laws of engagement, not to speak of more general laws of civilisation.

How can this arrogance be allowed? If the US has discarded even the semblance of an international justification to its policy of commercial and military preponderance in the region, regardless of the fact that none of the countries directly involved support its



aggressive stance, it must feel totally secure in its dominant position. A sad thought, indeed, for any who would like to think that there is something more to life than the American Dream.

BRANDINO RANGONI

London SW4

THE present Gulf crisis has its origins no more in a concern to protect humanity from an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction than the previous one had its own roots in a desire to uphold international law.

The actual *casus belli* is the desire of the United States to keep Iraq's oil off the world market, as American oil is profitably exploitable only at a selling price of \$16 per barrel or more; this amounts to a policy rather close to cannibalism.

GUILLAUME NICHOLS

Paris

Childcare tax breaks

I WAS delighted to read about your campaign for tax breaks for working mums. I chose to go back to work after my daughter

was born two years ago, both for financial reasons and because I enjoy my job. But it is very frustrating to do so and realise that by the time you have paid for childcare you might almost be better off not working at all. It seems grossly unfair to me that you are taxed on the money you earn and then have to pay someone else's tax for the "luxury" of going back to work.

It is about time that this country and government woke up to the fact that the family is the cornerstone of a civilised society, and stopped punishing women, in particular, and families, in general.

JULIA WILLIAMS
Epsom, Surrey

EVERY mother is a working mother, whether she works mainly in or outside the home, and it is about time the tax and benefit system recognised this. If women were paid a proper child benefit (reimbursable through a fairer tax system), then mothers would have a genuine choice about whether to pay for outside childcare so

that they could go out to work, or whether to use the money to enable them to work in the home, bringing up their own children. Your campaign calls for the former option; most mothers would prefer to have the choice.

JEAN MOLLOY
London SE13

I wholeheartedly support your campaign for tax help with childcare costs. But this measure alone falls far short of the changes needed for the UK to become a family-friendly society.

Parents also deserve the right to decent maternity and paternity leave, the right to work shorter hours so that tiny children are not away from home for 10 or more hours a day, and the right to take time off work when a young child is sick.

IMOGEN COOPER
Northampton

BRITAIN is a massively overpopulated country in a massively overpopulated world, yet your proposal would provide

one further incentive for people to burden themselves with children that they cannot afford and the nation does not need.

There is no good reason why other people should procreate at my expense. If tax breaks are to be given in this area at all, they should be given to single people without dependent children, who can work longer, move around more easily and use disproportionately few of the state's services.

ALASTAIR MEEKS
London SE13

Depoliticised youth

TARIQ ALI's reading (16 February) of the state of "political opinion" (or lack of opinion) among young people is, I believe, misled. The desertion of traditional student political forces is itself an expression of, if not dissent, at the very least disillusionment with the motives and achievements of most of these movements.

Young people take a pragmatic view when they look back at the great ideological

struggles of the 1960s and the 1970s. "Where has it led them?", they pertinently ask. All too often, yesterday's dissidents eventually joined the very establishment they fought on the barricades. Those who didn't try to make capital (political or monetary) reminiscing about the good old days.

Young people no longer take part in politics because they think (rightly, in my opinion) that dissident groups are no better than mainstream political parties. Maybe they appear not to have an opinion because they refuse to fall hostage to other people's dubious motives.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE SKIERA
London NW6

QUITE clearly Tariq Ali was around in the Sixties, because he surely doesn't remember them. If he had been asked 30 years ago if it was a good idea to stand up to a fascist dictator, his sentiments would not have been much different from those of today's youth.

ROBBIE JONES
Dublin

Junk by fax

I WAS repelled by the enthusiasm Hamish McRae displayed for the Orwellian vision of the future with the further refinement and focusing of computer databases which, he says, "will drive our living standards higher" ("The case for junk mail", 18 February).

But it costs me nothing to discard junk mail. Junk faxing costs me dearly. I have a widely listed fax line. As a result I start every day having to clear numerous unwanted mailing shots from my fax machine, every one of which has cost me about 10p a sheet to receive.

The volume has grown steadily week by week for about two years. Living as I do on the Co Down coast, hundreds of miles and a sea crossing away, I fail to understand why car dealers in Guildford, Pontefract or wherever, or computer shops in south-east London, should think I'm anxious to buy cars or computers, unseen, from them.

ROBERT RODWELL
Newtownards, Co Down

Save the arts

YOU are right to advocate direct tax incentives to encourage donors to support the arts, but why limit such incentives to arts donations?

You point to the experience of the United States, where overall levels of giving are about 2 per cent of GDP, compared to less than 1 per cent here in the UK. It is not because more people in the US give; participation in giving is about the same in both countries. For a number of reasons, key among them being tax incentives, amounts given are higher there. What a direct tax incentive for donors does change is the size of the donation, making it possible for people wanting to support an organisation to do so far more substantially.

Direct tax incentives for donations in the US exist for all gifts for qualified educational and charitable organisations, including, but certainly not limited to, arts organisations. They have been crucial for higher education, where individual contributions are the only funding source which is growing, accounting for 8-10 per cent of annual income, and far higher percentages of capital and endowment funding.

The need for raising substantial private funds for the arts - as well as charities, schools and universities - is now a challenging reality in Britain. Direct tax incentives could provide invaluable help to all these organisations in meeting this challenge.

KAREN WRIGHT
London WC1

The point of prayer

THE Bishop of Norwich worries "that we are in grave danger of losing ... the concept of learning prayer by heart" (report, 12 February).

I fail to see how learning prayer by rote has any worth. Surely the point of prayer is to reflect and consider what we are doing and to then seek better ways of behaving. Reciting a prayer without thinking of the words is no better than chanting a football terrace song.

J SUMNER
London NW3

Hot-headed

YOU report (17 February) on the health risks of mobile phones and the generation of heat on the brain. Is this what is known as "lobal warming"?

J L HARLEY
Chelmsford, Essex

An open letter to Fay Weldon (not suitable for transmission by fax)



MILES KINGTON

Dear Fay Weldon,

Ever since you moved back from Somerset to London I haven't seen you at all, so I have attempted to keep up with you by reading your writings, and I duly read a piece you wrote in *The Sunday Telegraph* earlier this month, all about how women should behave after the age of 50.

Well, I was wandering through the piece, vaguely taking in this advice for 50-year-old women, wondering how much of it would be applicable to men, when suddenly I came across something which stopped me in my tracks. It was when you said that one of the things you learn by the time you're 50 is that "people say nice things to you by fax, and nasty things by letter".

I know that novelists sometimes say things in articles which they don't really mean, simply because they sound interesting and because you have got to

say something to fill up 1,000 words, but that did sound a bit odd to me. Why should news in letters be nastier than in faxes? Why couldn't it be the other way round? Why ...?

And before I knew what I was doing, I had started looking through some of my most recent faxes and letters, and now that I have digested a lot of my correspondence (including some stuff I couldn't remember having seen before) I have formulated some more ground rules about methods of communication, which might form the subject-matter for ongoing discussion if you're game. I still haven't found any evidence for your theory one way or the other, but I do think it is time to say that ...

1. Faxes are generally used to remind you tersely of something you previously promised to do by letter or phone call.

2. You can leave a letter unopened, but

faxes are harder to ignore.

3. Nobody ever sends a Christmas family fax, only Christmas family letters.

4. All Christmas family letters include at least one fatal accident, major operation or disappearance.

5. One in every 15 faxes is from someone unknown to you promising either cheap World Cup tickets or cheap phone calls.

6. Nobody uses fax or letter to say thanks for dinner any more. It is always done on a postcard bearing the tiny replica of a famous painting.

7. One in every five faxes brings you a newspaper cutting which the sender is very anxious you should read. Unfortunately, they don't fax the cutting directly - it is always a fax of a photocopy of the original cutting, rendering it just illegible.

8. Signatures on holiday postcards never

give much clue as to who has sent the card.

9. If any fax is more than one page long, the first page of the fax never tells you anything except that the next page will be the real first page of the fax.

10. Writers of letters quite often add a note saying, "Don't bother to answer this." Writers of faxes never do this.

11. Indeed, senders of faxes get quite upset if you don't respond immediately, and very upset if you claim never to have received their fax.

12. Twice a week at least I answer my phone when it rings and hear the burling of a fax machine at the other end. I shout down it, "This isn't a fax - it's a phone!" but it never seems to have any effect.

13. Postmen still put Postage Due stamps on insufficiently stamped letters, but they never actually ask you

for the postage due any more.

14. The worst news (final reminders) and the best news (cheques) still come by post.

15. Nobody will ever have their collected faxes printed, if only because faxes gradually fade away.

16. Your letters can go to the house next door, but your faxes can't.

17. You can send an anonymous letter, but a fax can always be traced to the machine that sent it.

18. Mad, obscene and offensive messages are harder to send by fax because you can't use green ink.

19. Junk faxes are junkier than junk mail.

20. Nobody ever sent an Open Fax to Fay Weldon.

Yours,
Miles Kington

John Redwood joins the tribe of pygmy Tories



DONALD MACINTYRE
A FATAL LACK OF JUDGEMENT

What's wrong with John Redwood? He fulfils, after all, many of the requirements of a big politician. He has real courage, exhibited by his decision to resign and stand against John Major in 1995. He is seriously clever, or he wouldn't have successfully run Margaret Thatcher's Policy Unit in the 1980s. He is articulate, as he proved in an interview with Sir David Frost only last weekend. And he has energy, which drove his tireless campaign against Lord Simon's famous BP shares. So what's missing?

Forget the cliché about Redwood being a Vulcan. I suspect he has emotions as strong as any politician and quite a lot stronger than many. No, part of what is missing is that elusive quality called judgement. His infantile protest this week against the decision to grant the freedom of the City of London to Helmut Kohl was rewarded by a humiliating and commendably swift put-down from William Hague.

He hadn't even bothered to check, before tabling a dozen conspiracy-hunting parliamentary questions, the truth - which is that the City of London Corporation thought up the idea of awarding the Chancellor the City's greatest honour and then checked that the Foreign Office and Downing Street approved. But it is scarcely a first offence. He launched his leadership campaign against John Major surrounded by the most colourfully nutty elements of the Tory right. He idiotically attacked Tony Blair on the grounds that he couldn't both claim a leading role in the EU and travel to Tokyo, when in fact trade relations with Japan are a natural preoccupation of the EU presidency. He has pursued a relentlessly personal campaign against Margaret Beckett in which an obsession with trivia has overwhelmed the perfectly valid arguments that could be mounted against her stewardship of the DTL.

Some of this is quite easy to excuse. Being in opposition against a government with a majority of 179, led by a Prime Minister who continues to break all opinion poll records, isn't exactly easy. And in a scarcely star-studded shadow cabinet, he has at least been visible. You could, too, explain some of his lapses as the result of losing his former adviser Hywel Williams, an unusual former Rugby schoolmaster with wit, imagination and common-sense, who is now cheerfully putting the finishing touches to *Guilty Men*, a book which seeks, by all accounts, to lay the blame for the eclipse of Conservatism on all leading Conservatives. Redwood included. An overactive press officer who stalks the corridors of Westminster bearing Redwood's latest daily pronouncement on every subject in the news is no substitute for Williams' - at times - restraining influence.

But Redwood's latest offence is quite a lot more than a mere tactical slip. It's somehow appropriate that he should have earned his

reprimand from William Hague on the day they buried Enoch Powell, a politician best remembered for resigning from the government and then, 10 years later, being sacked in opposition by his party leader for an act of destructive right-wing populism. Powell had charisma and a national constituency of a sort that Redwood can only dream about.

Powell was much the more dangerous of the two men, and his offence as a member of the shadow cabinet correspondingly more monstrous. But the parallels shouldn't be altogether dismissed. For what Redwood tapped into, for all his weaselly admission that "many British people have no personal dislike of Chancellor Kohl", is a perversion of truth as indefensible as Powell's dire predictions of racial war a generation ago. Redwood referred archly in his press release to the embarrassment of entertaining "a most important guest against the most unfortunate background of a street protest" - conferring a kind of wholesome respectability to a ragged but unpleasant group of right-wing extremists whose idea of an appropriate welcome for the man who is indisputably Europe's biggest statesman is to play recordings of air raid sirens from the Blitz.

The perversion is so simple as hardly to need restating: the Kohl project is precisely the opposite of what politicians who demonise the German Chancellor seek to foster - namely that Kohl seeks to secure by peaceful means the dominance of Europe which the Third Reich failed to do by war. Redwood would no doubt disclaim such a crudity, but he does nothing to eliminate it. It was the lie that brought Wednesday's "street protest" to the Mansion House. It was the lie explicitly told by the late Sir James Goldsmith to his now beached army of Referendum Party supporters - many of whom pro-European Tories now fear are infiltrating the Conservative Party in the hope of ensuring right-wing nationalists displace incumbents and their supporters as candidates for the 1999 European elections. And it rests on the proposition that Kohl wants a German Europe, of which monetary union is assumed to be the engine, when his whole political life has been devoted to the goal of a European Germany.

In a moving speech on Wednesday night Kohl contrasted free movement within Europe with his own adolescence, when he needed a permit to cross the Rhine from one part of occupied Germany to another. He graciously paid tribute to London as the haven for refugees from Nazi barbarity. He did not, as he would have been entitled to do, boast that he, and not Thatcher or Gorbachev, had been vindicated by the reunification of Germany. You don't have to agree with EMU to recognise this as a speech which made Redwood look like a political dwarf.

All this, there is reason to hope, is what Hague has recognised. Here the Redwood-Powell parallel is again instructive. Those who, finally, had most reason to resent Powell's Rivers of Blood speech were those who revere him as the pioneer, by his resignation in 1958, of the cause of sound money and fiscal prudence. Similarly it's the EMU sceptics who have most to fear from Kohl-baiting on the right, because it damages their cause among sensible, moderate, non-xenophobic people. Hague's lieutenants denied yesterday the strong inference by some in the shadow cabinet that Hague had now shown Redwood the yellow card. But speculation that he might become the next shadow chancellor suddenly looks hopelessly inappropriate. In the case of fatally flawed politicians like Powell we are supposed to forget the flaws and remember the cause. But we don't; and Redwood urgently needs to remember that if he is to stay in the game at all.

Go tell it on the mountain, but leave this Jewish boy alone



DAVID AARONOVITCH
ON BEING A TARGET OF EVANGELISTS

It was too much to hope for that Nick Howard, the son of the former Home Secretary Michael Howard, might turn out to be as socially useful and as entrepreneurial a young man as William Straw.

Jack's boy, of course, supplied a *Mirror* reporter with marijuana (a case of coals to Newcastle if ever there was one). Alas, Nick - a third year student at Oxford University - deals in very different opiates. He is an evangelical Christian who, in recent weeks, has been targeting Jewish students, with the aim of converting them to the one true faith - his. And it is causing a lot of trouble.

Howard senior is, of course, Jewish. But, as is the way with youth, the son renounced the faith of his father (while a schoolboy at Eton) and would now, presumably, like to see his dad come over to Jesus. So he has set about organising meetings to which his proselytising comrades are encouraged to bring Jewish friends, plying them with kosher food and the promise of redemption through the Lord. He is, after all, doing them a *mitzvah*, because - as he puts it - "Christianity is fulfilled Judaism."

The conversion of the Jews is a touchy subject. Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, who runs a society for Jewish students at Oxford, was incensed. Accusing Howard of "spiritual Nazism", Rabbi Boteach alleged this week that "such behaviour is a direct cause of anti-Semitism". He then lodged a formal complaint with the university's vice-chancellor, the distinguished historian, Professor Sir Colin Lucas.

My first reaction to this outburst was that the rabbi ought to take more water with it. There are some Jews, I thought, who reach for the A-S word a little too readily. And certainly this morning's *Jewish Chronicle* takes a similarly relaxed view of the affair, carrying an editorial commiserating with the embarrassment caused to Michael Howard. After all, those Jews who want to attend Christian Union meetings and munch gefilte fish while absorbing the message must be a pretty sad bunch anyway. Otherwise they'd be busy revising, fornicating, smoking dope or saving trees, like everyone else. I my-

self was pestered for a couple of years by a tedious group called "Jews for Jesus" which posted its Xeroxed nonsense to anyone with a vaguely Yiddish name. And it didn't do me any harm.

That, as I said, was my first reaction. And then I began to wonder. There had, after all, been something about Jews for Jesus that was vaguely unsettling. It had to do with the idea of being targeted specifically, of becoming the focus of such attention by reason of one's birth (or, in their case, by reason of a name ending in -vitch). When the Rabbi complained that Nick Howard's unwanted attentions somehow suggested that Jewishness was a lesser state, perhaps he had a point.

Part of the trouble is that, for most of the last two millennia, this conversion business has been a one-way street. Once upon a time Jews did return the compliment. Richard Fletcher's recent history, *The Conversion of Europe*, cites the debate between Bodo Eleazer, a Christian turned Jew (and servant of Charlemagne), who - in 838 - crossed the Pyrenees and entered into a written controversy with Paul Alvar of Cordoba. Which he won. Oh, and Archbishop Andrew of Bari, converted to Judaism on a trip to Constan-

tinople in 1066. After that, however, it was all pretty much Christians attempting to convert Jews by one method or another. Usually another. From the Crusades, through the Spanish Inquisition to the London Society to Disseminate the Christian Faith Among Jews, they tried.

Jews did not reciprocate. In fact for centuries Jews have seemed to suggest to Gentiles that they are largely indifferent to their religious beliefs, possessing little desire to fill up the synagogues with goyim. This may have been a mistake; perhaps Christians would have preferred to have been courted and seduced - for this absence of Jewish evangelism

For centuries Jews have seemed to suggest to Gentiles that they are largely indifferent to their religious beliefs, possessing little desire to fill up the synagogues with goyim

ried out; and the sons of former cabinet ministers coming home from public school for the long vac, wearing a Homburg, scalplocks, a prayer shawl and greeting their mothers with the words "Oy yeh, Mum, this you'll never guess!" So Judaism is not, in its later manifestations, an aggressive religion. You don't want to be a Jew? So don't be a Jew?

But this passivity can be a disadvantage when faced with evangelism. Jews have thrived in Britain because this is not a religious country. Here, Christianity is - in general - deprived of its edge by the good old Church of England.

Evangelists, of course, cannot be tolerant. They must con-

vert. They believe that they are saved and that the rest of us are damned and that it is their job to save us - every bit as much you or I might try to save a drowning child from a pond. (Not an exact metaphor, I know, since children do not like to drown). It is for them, just as it is for Catholics who believe that abortion is murder

Why are they the priority? Why are not Muslims - adherents to a far more activist and numerous religion - the priority? It couldn't be, could it, that the spotty Herberts of the Christian Union are afraid of being duffed up; that Jews are a softer target because they are not so likely to burn your rooms and assassinate your scout? No, that's too cynical.

But there is something unpleasant, nonetheless, about being singled out for conversion - as though your religion, your faith, was the most corrupting and dangerous of all. In a society where there are many more Christians than Jews it feels just a bit like bullying.

There is, of course, nothing that can be done here. Despite Rabbi Boteach's protests the vice-chancellor would be ill-advised to get involved. As long as young Nick limits himself to meetings, debates and newsletters, there is no justification for leaning on him. But perhaps Nick himself should recall that the most fearsome Grand Inquisitor of them all - the scourge of Spanish Jewry, Fr. Tomas de Torquemada - was a Christian of Jewish descent.

You see, that's the point.



'Pestered for years by a tedious group': Jews for Jesus demo, 1986 Sidney Harris

Put away that Filofax. Pick up that palmtop. Get with it



CHARLES ARTHUR
THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Times are hard at Filofax Group. Yesterday executives at the company were surely flicking through their hand-tooled leather binders, seeking the names of companies or firms or friends or (who knows?) people they might have met once on a plane who would be interested in buying all or part of the company, or getting together for a "strategic alliance" (business-speak for rescue) or joint venture (business-speak for an escape hatch).

Am I surprised that they're finding life hard? Hell no. If your line of work is essentially producing a glorified paper-based address book and diary, of course life is going to get tough when electronic rivals spring up. And they're all over the place right now. Basically, we're all embracing the ideas of Nicholas Negroponte, head of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab, and "going digital".

It was about the middle of last year when Filofax noticed that, for the first time in its decades of existence, British customers were spending more money on refills for existing binders than on new ones. That's bad news, for them anyway, since it means that people are turning to newer means of storing their lives. It's simple to see why pocket-sized computers are storming ahead. If even staff in Dixons can demonstrate them,

they really must be easy to use.

If you consider the relative merits of the two forms of data storage - paper-based ring binder or pocket-sized computer - there's no contest. The computers' prices are storming downwards, while including features you could never put into a Filofax.

For example, when is a Filofax going to chime gently to remind you of a forthcoming appointment, and so drive everyone sitting near you half-mad because you happen to be away from your desk at the time and nobody can work out what "that annoying bloody chiming noise" is? Will a Filofax ever automatically dial a telephone number for you, saving wear and tear on delicate fingers?

Of course, I'll admit that the Filofax shares honours with the palmtop when it comes to the function that children find most essential in a world diary: both will tell you in seconds what the time is in Djakarta.

Also, palmtops bring their own set of frustrations to the business of having a life. Two friends who bought them with the intention of revolutionising their lives (on, I'll admit, my urging) and transferred all their contact numbers and essential must-remember facts on to their machines turned them on one day to find the memory wiped clean, returned to a sort of primeval electronic soup.

"But what on earth has happened?" said one friend querulously, as she contacted the helpline for the computer's manufacturer.

"Ah, that seems to happen with the new ones," said the man on the helpline, unhelpfully. "But the good thing is that it only happens once in their lifetime. Now you should be fine for the rest of its life."

Certainly, neither machine

If your line is producing a paper-based address book and diary, life is going to get tough when electronic rivals arrive

has since lost any more stored addresses, because both friends have put them with their other life-changing items, such as the exercise bike and the plastic stomach-flattener that lets you get fit while watching TV: under the stairs.

However, both those friends are female, and so obviously less likely to continue using a gadget in the face of adversity. For that you need a man. Another male palmtop user I know has continued with gritted teeth to use his ageing machine, even though the screen is now so broken that he has to hold it over his head to read it. Yet another discovered his machine didn't

stand up well to being dropped. Now in order to get from the address book to the diary function, he has to stab the keys so hard onlookers think he is trying to shorten his fingers the hard way.

I'll admit that I was a bit stymied myself when my own machine was stolen a few months ago. Now that really did make it quite difficult to find numbers. Happily, it was re-

covered a few weeks later. The physical part, in fact, was undamaged. However, the thief had been through my database, deleting each entry, before getting bored. On getting it back, I found that names I thought I had put in weren't there. To this day, I don't know exactly what was lost.

But again, the gadget comes back into its own: it takes only moments to copy all the files from the machine on to a little backup disk, so that even if the machine disappears, I can refill another one (perhaps a friend's discarded one) with my personal knowledge and details.

Being so replaceable and

copyable is what makes digital "bits" appealing, of course. Have you ever tried make a safety copy of a Filofax that's been used for a while? I haven't, but I'm assured that with a good photocopy and a determined attitude you can manage it in, oh, about half an hour. Of course, if your binder is stolen you'll have to transcribe all that data into your new one. While doing this, try not to snarl at the person uploading all their data on to their new palmtop from their old one in a matter of seconds.

Yet this very flexibility means that for some people, palmtops will simply never be an option. One cannot imagine super-rich people such as the exotic "Bride of Wildenstein" (who in her divorce case claimed that she didn't know how to make toast) ever wanting to plan her plastic surgery schedule on a palmtop (Tues: nose. Weds: Eyes again).

That of course instantly suggests precisely where the troubled folks at Filofax should focus their efforts. These days, you can get ballpoint pens, solar-powered digital clocks accurate to milliseconds and clothing such as sweatshirts and baseball caps for free, if you know the right place to stand. But rich people won't touch them. They prefer Mont Blanc fountain pens, Rolex Oyster watches, Calvin Klein shirts. Surely it's time for the hand-engraved, silver-edged, catfiskin Filofax?

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Chancellor prepares reform of National Insurance to create jobs

By Andrew Verity

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is preparing a radical change to employers' National Insurance (NI) rates in an attempt to create jobs by abolishing disincentives to employing workers on low pay.

In proposals expected to form a key plank of the Budget, the Chancellor is expected to lift the lower earnings limit for NI, allowing employers to pay up to £80 a week without contributing to the fund. It

would be the most radical change to NI in a decade.

Crucially, higher paid employees would cost more in NI, effectively shifting the burden of tax from small to large employers. To make the reform tax-neutral, employers would have to pay higher NI contributions (NICs) on any salaries over £440 a week.

A document setting out the proposal was yesterday circulated to interested parties by Martin Taylor, the head of the government's tax and

benefit review and chief executive of Barclays.

In the document, Mr Taylor said he was following Mr Brown's pledge to review the NI structure for the low paid, bringing it much closer into line with income tax.

The document says: "These proposals aim to encourage the creation of 'entry jobs' for the unemployed returning to work, and to reduce burdens on business by simplifying the complex structure of employer rates."

Later, Mr Taylor adds: "The

main consequence would be to increase employer NICs slightly in respect of higher paid employees (is over £440 a week)."

As well as lifting the burden on the lowest paid employees, the reform would eliminate "distortions" in the system which lead to employers paying marginal rates of tax of over 100 per cent when they raise pay.

Under the current system, employers are encouraged to pay less than the lower earnings limit (to be £64 a week from April) because they

do not then pay any NICs. Above £64, the employer pays 3 per cent on all pay - not just the excess.

For an employee paid £64, rather than £63, an employer pays £1.28 in tax on the extra pound - a marginal rate of 128 per cent. This causes employers to "bunch" employees below £64 a week.

A similar effect occurs as income rises. Earnings over £110 require a 5 per cent contribution on all pay; earnings over £155 are at 7 per cent; and earnings over £210 are at 10 per cent.

Instead, the government proposes to have a rate of 12.2 per cent - but only on earnings in excess of £80. "The previous system would be replaced by one in which only earnings above the threshold of £80 would be liable to the employers' charge, levied at a single rate," the document states.

An increase in earnings from £109 to £110 a week would generate contributions of 12p a week - rather than £2.23 a week at present.

Mr Taylor, together with the

Treasury, have been at pains to stress that the proposed reform would be "tax neutral" - that is, no extra tax would be raised. However, it would also be the first attempt since 1979 to shift the tax burden from the lower to the higher paid.

Adam Turner, director-general of the CBI, said: "Such a reform could have a positive impact on employment. We will however, have to consider in more detail the overall impact on companies with a high average salary bill."

De La Rue chief quits after fresh profit warning

By Peter Thal Larsen

De La Rue yesterday shocked the market when it unveiled its fourth profit warning in less than three years and revealed plans to halve its annual dividend. Jeremy Marshall, who has been chief executive of the banknote and cash handling group since 1989, has left the company after deciding to retire two years earlier than expected.

Shares in De La Rue crashed 92.5p to 270p - their lowest level for more than seven years - as the company warned that operating profits for the year to March 1998 would be about £30m less than last year's £60.5m.

The news prompted analysts to slash £15m off their profit forecasts for the group. Pre-tax profits, which include contributions from associate companies like lottery operator Camelot, are now expected to come in at about £90m this year and £72.5m in 1999.

Brandon Gough, the Yorkshire Water chairman who only took over as chairman of De La Rue six months ago, will run the company until a new chief executive is found. He said yesterday it was "time for a change at De La Rue."

Under the terms of his two-year rolling contract Mr Marshall, 60, is expected to receive compensation of about £570,000. Last night one institutional shareholder described the payoff as "a bit rich" given that Mr Marshall was close to

retirement and had presided over a disastrous slump in the share price.

In the early 1990s, a banknote printing boom in the newly liberalised economies of Eastern Europe helped De La Rue's share price, lifting it to an all-time high of 1050p in 1995. Since then, however, the company suffered one disappointment after another as cut-throat competitors muscled in on De La Rue's market.

Analysts said the company had also lost credibility by consistently missing its profit targets.

De La Rue blamed yesterday's warning on the effects of the strong pound and the Asian crisis, as well as the absence of one-off banknote printing contracts from other central banks. The company had also increased development spending in areas of new technology like plastic "smartcards", which are increasingly expected to replace traditional bank notes as the most popular form of payment.

Mr Gough said it was time for De La Rue to rebuild confidence in the City: "We need to rebase expectations and concentrate on delivering solid profits. We have to go forward not back."

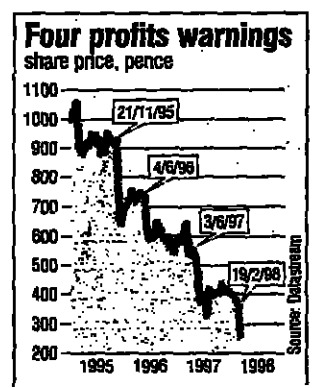
As part of the shift, the company announced plans to pay a final dividend of 4.5p, making a total payout of 12p - half last year's level. Mr Gough said the decision to cut the dividend had not been an easy one to take, but that the move would send a signal to investors that De La Rue had changed.

The company hopes to bring in a new chief executive by the autumn. Mr Gough said the board would consider all candidates, though in the circumstances, it was sensible to look outside the company.

De La Rue also said it was preparing to sell its US physical security business, while the future of its loss-making German arm was under review.

But Mr Gough said making more of the potential synergies in the business was the key to future growth. The company has created a separate business specialising in brand protection, which it sees as a growth area.

Analysts, however, said the new business was "small beer" and that the prospects for De La Rue's recovery were dependent on how much business it could pick up preparing for the introduction of the European single currency towards the end of the century.



'Le Réve' by Pablo Picasso from the modern art collection owned by Victor and Sally Ganz goes under the hammer at Christie's in New York

Loan on mystery collection leaves £5m hole at Christie's

Christie's International, the auction house which called off bid talks with SBC Warburg Dillon Read on Wednesday, has been forced to make a £5.3m exceptional charge to its profits because of a loan it made to a vendor on a collection it has not yet sold.

Christie's loaned the money to the owner of an "unusual but important" collection. However, there has been a substantial delay in bringing the collection to the market during which the value of the collection has fallen. It has therefore been forced to make a £5.3m provision against the possible loss on the loan.

The announcement sur-

prised the City though Christie's claimed such loans were standard practice in the art world in order to accommodate collectors who wanted a quick sale but found that a suitable auction may not be possible for some time.

The news knocked the shine off Christie's results which, excluding exceptional rose by 20 per cent to £40.6m for the year to 31 December. The company made few comments on

the collapse of bid talks SBC Warburg. "It was an interesting idea but at the end of the day there wasn't something coming forth that we could recommend," said finance director Peter Blythe. "No formal offer was made and because the discussions were confidential we're not going to reveal details."

Christie's shares fell 10p to 255p as dealers reacted to the abandonment of the talks. It is understood that the Warburg

bid, which included six high net worth individuals, was pitched at only 270p-280p per share.

The effect of the exceptional item restrained Christie's profit increase to a four per cent rise to £35.3m. Auction sales grew by 20 per cent in sterling terms to £1.2bn in 1997, with the main contribution coming from the sale of two outstanding collections.

The Ganz Collection of twentieth century art realised

\$207m (£126m), the largest total ever achieved for a single collection at auction. Eighteen lots were sold for more than \$1m, 10 of them by Picasso, including *Le Réve* for \$48.4m - the second highest price paid for the artist's work.

The Loeb Collection of mainly impressionist works made \$92.8m, the third biggest for a single-owner sale. It included Paul Cézanne's *Madame Cézanne du fauteuil jaune* for \$23.1m and Edouard Manet's *Self Portrait* for \$18.7m.

Sales of Impressionist and modern works of art totalled £388m, up 89 per cent on the previous year.

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Bank team split on need for further rate rises

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, admitted yesterday that he would have voted to raise interest rates, rather than leave them unchanged, in January if Gordon Brown had not relaxed the inflation target to a range around 2.5 per cent from the previous target of 2.5 per cent or less.

But evidence from four members of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee to the House of Commons Treasury Committee yesterday suggested that there is still a difference of opinion about whether or when rates will need to rise again.

Mr George said: "I would have voted to raise rates in January on the old basis of 2.5 per cent or less." The choice of target was a matter for the Chancellor, he said. The new target is for a range of 1 per cent either side of 2.5 per cent, effectively

translating into a band of between 1.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent.

Even so, Mr George emerged from the session sounding reluctant to increase borrowing costs, though he did not say so explicitly. He defended the MPC - which voted not to increase rates either last month or this month - against the charge of inconsistency despite the Bank's new forecast showing inflation likely to be above 2.5 per cent in 2 years' time.

There were great uncer-

tainties, the Governor said. He added: "We would not want to crush domestic demand tomorrow... That would be to plunge the economy unnecessarily into recession."

He also said there had been much greater concern at the turn of the year about how the Asian crisis would affect the rest of the world. The fear of a full-blown financial crisis had receded since then, he said.

Mr George said this week's strong retail sales figures had to

be seen in the context of big seasonal swings. "I don't think you can say it influences things decisively one way or the other," he said.

Mervyn King, one of the Bank's Deputy Governors, said he had also voted to wait and see in January. "There were enormous uncertainties at that stage," he explained.

Charles Goodhart, an external MPC member who favoured a rate increase last month, told the MPs: "Waiting in the hope that uncertainties will be re-

solved is pretty fruitless." Another member, Willem Buiter, agreed. "Moving earlier is superior to moving later," he said.

Mr King said the split vote should have come as no surprise. "When the judgement is so finely balanced, it is the most natural thing in the world for people to disagree," he said. He insisted there was no pressure on "inside" Bank members of the MPC to vote together.

Mr George said the February Inflation Report showed a higher forecast for inflation than the November Report because the effect of the strong pound had not worked through to retail prices as quickly as expected.

The Bank's experts told the MPs ways pressures now presented the biggest concern about inflation. "We are nervous that the labour market is at a point where we may see an acceleration in pay and earnings," the Governor explained.

Outlook, page 21

BAe at war with French over European defence restructuring

By Michael Harrison

An Anglo-French stand-off between British Aerospace and the state-owned Aerospatiale is threatening to scupper plans due to be unveiled next month for the grand restructuring of Europe's defence and aerospace industries.

BAe warned yesterday that there were a number of "major hurdles" in the way of consolidation. The major obstacle was a French "state owned entity totally dominated by government departments", it said.

The warning follows an unprecedented trilateral declaration last December by the governments of Britain, France and Germany calling on their aerospace and defence electronics industries to "consolidate or die" and giving them until 31 March to produce a clear plan and timetable for action.

Unveiling a one-third increase in pre-tax profits before exceptional items last year to £596m, Sir Dick Evans, BAe's chief executive, warned that it would not sign up to any restructuring deal which disadvantaged its shareholders.

Richard Laphorne, the company's finance director, added: "We have a position to defend and we are not going to play cricket. We have to be very careful we do not compromise for the sake of doing a deal."

Mr Laphorne added that if the restructuring plan succeeded it could involve the merger of the entire company with its counterparts in France and Germany. For that reason, BAe is keen to enter negotiations from a position of strength and maximum size, suggesting it has no short-term plans to dispose of its 21 per cent stake in Orange,

currently worth £365m. Aerospatiale countered yesterday with a corporate reorganisation under which its defence and civil businesses are being spun off in readiness for European link-ups.

Daimler Benz of Germany, one of BAe's partners on the Airbus and Eurofighter programmes, is thought to be broadly supportive of the British position. However, it is lukewarm to BAe's vision of a European-wide defence and aerospace holding company, dubbed Euro Co.

Sir Dick said that Airbus was considering raising production to 300 a year by 1999 compared with 182 last year. Repayment of launch aid on the A320 and A330/A340 programmes will meanwhile rise from £66m last year to £140m this year and £170m in 1999.

Outlook, page 21

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change%	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield%
FTSE 100	5718.50	-4.90	-0.09	5741.30	4189.10	3.11
FTSE 250	5017.20	2.20	0.04	5016.80	4384.20	3.08
FTSE 350	2719.50	-1.70	-0.06	2728.10	2075.70	3.10
FTSE All Share	2647.24	-1.53	-0.06	2655.02	2096.07	3.09
FTSE Smallcap	2438.20	0.50	0.02	2432.70	2182.10	2.84
FTSE Financials	1330.20	2.50	0.19	1346.50	1224.20	3.29
FTSE AIM	1022.40	-0.10	-0.01	1138.00	865.90	0.95
FTSE AIM	8404.97	-44.34	-0.53	8451.06	6356.78	1.98
Dow Jones	8404.97	-44.34	-0.53	8451.06	6356.78	1.98
Nikkei	15618.48	2.58	0.02	20810.79	14488.21	0.82
Hang Seng	10681.27	-88.88	-0.84	10620.31	7909.13	3.71
Dax	4582.40	-46.43	-1.00	4633.01	3171.05	1.62

INTEREST RATES

Index	3 month	1 yr	2 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	30 yr
UK	7.56	1.20	7.55	0.87	5.95	-1.17	5.91
US	5.63	0.16	5.66	-0.09	5.50	-0.81	5.85
Japan	0.86	0.36	0.82	0.25	1.91	-0.63	2.51
Germany	3.50	0.51	3.75	0.52	4.95	-0.55	5.53

Index	3 month	1 yr	2 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	30 yr
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Japan	0.86	0.36	0.82	0.25	1.91	-0.63	2.51
Germany	3.50	0.51	3.75	0.52	4.95	-0.55	5.53

CURRENCIES

Index	3 month	1 yr	2 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	30 yr
UK	7.56	1.20	7.55	0.87	5.95	-1.17	5.91
US	5.63	0.16	5.66	-0.09	5.50	-0.81	5.85
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Japan	0.86	0.36	0.82	0.25	1.91	-0.63	2.51
Germany	3.50	0.51	3.75	0.52	4.95	-0.55	5.53

TOURIST RATES

Index	3 month	1 yr	2 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	30 yr
UK	7.56	1.20	7.55	0.87	5.95	-1.17	5.91
US	5.63	0.16	5.66	-0.09	5.50	-0.81	5.85
Japan	0.86	0.36	0.82	0.25	1.91	-0.63	2.51
Germany	3.50	0.51	3.75	0.52	4.95	-0.55	5.53

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Germany	3.50	0.51	3.75	0.52	4.95	-0.55	5.53



OUTLOOK ON EUROPEAN DEFENCE RESTRUCTURING, CHRISTIE'S AND INTEREST RATE JUDGEMENTS

French stand in the way of defence entente

It always did look hopelessly optimistic to expect the aerospace industries of Europe to come up with a battle plan for rationalisation in the space of three months. That was what the politicians wanted but given the long years these companies have already spent dancing around the idea of consolidation, it never seemed very likely.

The political impetus behind last December's exhortation to British Aerospace and GEC and their counterparts in France and Germany to "rationalise or die" was impressive enough. Tony Blair, no less, signed the unilateral statement along with the French President, Jacques Chirac, and the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. Even so, getting a "clear plan and timetable for action" out of their respective national champions by 31 March was about as likely as the Americans getting a Security Council mandate to bomb Baghdad.

When it comes to competing in world defence markets, there can be little doubt that sooner or later even companies the size of BAe, Daimler-Benz and Aerospatiale will find themselves under the fire of a combined assault from Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon.

For the Europeans, however, the main difficulty has always been that of agreeing just who the enemy is - the Americans or each other. Hence the bellicose words yesterday from BAe. Its top brass has made it plain that it has no intention of playing cricket with the French. This is shorthand for not ceding an inch in any eventual three-way merger to an industry that is still state-owned in both name and mentality.

Aerospatiale's internal restructuring yesterday into separate aircraft, space and defence subsidiaries, "to support its role as the major French player in the construction of a Europe wide civil and military aerospace industry", may look good on paper but it will have fooled no-one down at Farnborough.

It will be a minor miracle if BAe and its partners in the Airbus civil aircraft programme (including the French) have sorted out whose assets are worth what in time for the consortium to start functioning as a single corporate entity by this time next year. It will be a bigger miracle if the participants have agreed the framework for an all embracing European defence company. Until the French government bites the bullet and puts its aerospace industry on the same footing as others through a stratagem of privatisation, the chances of meaningful rationalisation look slim.

Making a lottery out of an auction

Christie's International, the art auctioneer, yesterday unveiled what on the face of it looked like a splendid set of results. Sales and profits were both up a fifth, and despite the disappearance from the showrooms of Asian buyers, Christie's talked in glowing terms about the best art sales market in years. Which is just as well, since the company has just turned down an offer said to be in the region of 280p a share

from a consortium of billionaires organised by SBC Warburg Dillon Read. The offer is now on Christopher Davidge, chief executive, to demonstrate that his company is worth more.

But hold on a minute. What's this? The profit before tax is struck before an exceptional item of £5.3m. Factoring this cost in, profits last year would have risen at all. So what is this "exceptional cost"? Not saying, says Christie's, other than to explain that it is apparently common practice in the art world to make loans to clients secured against consignments for sale. In this case a loan was made against the security of an "unusual but important collection". However, prices in this section of the market have since fallen and Christie's now thinks it prudent to make a provision.

According to the company's statement, the loan was made "some years ago", which rather begs the question of why it has taken so long to provide against it. Presumably it might have something to do with Warburg's due diligence. But the rather bigger question is whether such losses should be treated as exceptional at all. These days auction houses are often forced to back their valuations by bidding against each other for big collections before the real auction begins.

It is not clear that shareholders in these companies fully appreciate the degree of financial risk that this involves. Shareholders may have thought they were investing in a commission based, people business. In fact the nature of auctioneering may have changed to the degree that these

are now more sophisticated finance companies than anything else.

Get the valuation right, and you make hay, get it wrong and you lose your shirt. It is an open secret, for instance, that though the Canz collection had record takings, Christie's actually made very little money out of it. This was because the financial underwriting was done by someone else (again, Christie's is not saying who).

Judging by the exceptional item, in many other cases Christie's is taking the risk onto its own books. It may be that Christie's is clever and well capitalised enough to manage this risk, but don't bet on it. Whatever the case, shareholders ought to be aware that they are investing in more of a bank than an auction house.

Confusion for Bank-watchers

The more transparent the inner workings of the Bank of England become, the more confusing its decisions seem to be. Never before have so many of its representatives spent so much time explaining in so much detail when and why they thought interest rates should move - or not - by a quarter point.

Unfortunately all this openness doesn't seem to make the conduct of monetary policy any more predictable than when it was left in the hands of capricious politicians. Rather the reverse. At least with the politicians you knew they'd cook the policy to serve their own political goals. By contrast, several hours of questioning by

MPs of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee yesterday failed to elicit much on which way interest rates would next move.

A good part of the explanation for the more transparency, less clarity paradox lies in economic developments. The one thing the MPC members certainly agreed on yesterday was the fact that they face a genuinely difficult choice at the moment. For every indicator pointing one way, there is another pointing in the opposite direction. Retail sales too strong last month? Pay settlements creeping up? Well, manufacturing output is falling and broad money growth is at last slowing down. Some bits of the economy are too strong but perhaps slowing, others are too weak. Nobody really knows how the countervailing forces will affect inflation.

Nor can anyone blame the MPC for disagreeing about a small change in interest rates, and whether or not that will make any difference to inflation down the road. The economic outlook is inherently uncertain around the turning point of the cycle, doubly so given the Asian crisis and impending start of Emu. Even so, the paradox is not completely resolved. It may be that over time it will become easier to figure out how the minds of MPC members work in different circumstances.

For now, the judgment about interest rates is being made not as in the past by a single person - the Chancellor - whose thought-processes had to be second-guessed, but by eight, soon to be nine. The complex art of Bank-watching, as the MPC engages in its ever more complex art of monetary policy, is only in its infancy.

Somerfield shares soar as rival bid speculation mounts

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Speculation was growing last night that a rival bidder may enter the fray for either Somerfield and Kwik Save as the two supermarket companies confirmed their £1.4bn merger. Shares in both companies soared amid rumours, largely discounted, that Sainsbury might make a move for Somerfield and that Safeway might be interested in the combined group.

Analysts were dismissive of the rumours but were struggling to explain the reason for the 15 per cent increase in the share prices of both companies yesterday afternoon. Somerfield shares jumped 38p to a new high of 299p. Kwik Save shares put on 44.5p to 343.5p even though the merger details included a Kwik Save profits warning.

Sainsbury refused to comment on what it described as "market speculation." However, it is considered highly unlikely that it would be interested in Somerfield. All the major supermarket groups were offered the chance to buy

Somerfield at 165p per share in August 1996 when Kleinwort Benson was struggling to float the company on the stock market. Such a deal would also run into competition problems on grounds of market share.

Safeway would experience similar problems and it is not thought to be interested in either chain.

Some analysts suggested an overseas bidder might be interested though most were sceptical that a rival bidder would come forward for two of the UK's weakest supermarket players. "Why would anyone want to buy Somerfield now when it could have bought it 18 months ago for almost half the price," one analyst said. Paul Smiddy, of Crédit Lyonnais Laing, added: "The share movements are astonishing. I would have thought that most of the industry would be quietly laughing at this deal. The management task is enormous."

Most analysts remain underwhelmed by the "oil premium" merger because they feel that the fundamental problems of weak brands, poor store portfolios and slow sales growth, will remain. Somerfield yesterday con-

firmed more details of the merger. It will be effected by a share-for-share exchange with Kwik Save shareholders receiving seven Somerfield shares for every six Kwik Save shares held. Somerfield shareholders will therefore hold 62.5 per cent of the enlarged group with Kwik Save holding the remainder.

Kwik Save's head office in Prestatyn, is earmarked for phased closure, threatening 800 jobs. Further jobs could go at the 120 stores which overlap in the two groups' portfolios. Annual cost savings of £50m a year are expected.

The company will initially be called Somerfield although a new name is being considered. A new, independent chairman is being sought although Simon Keswick, Kwik Save's chairman, will fulfil the role short term.

Somerfield will hold the whip hand on the new board with eight of the 15 places compared to Kwik Save's six. David Simons of Somerfield will be chief executive with Kwik Save's Phil Smith acting as deputy. Martin Gatto, Somerfield's finance director, will take the finance role in the enlarged company.

UK-US power pact by unions

By Michael Harrison

Unions representing 350,000 electricity workers in Britain and the US yesterday forged an unprecedented transatlantic pact which could result in joint co-ordination of collective bargaining and industrial action.

The move is designed to mirror the fast-changing structure of the power industry which has seen seven of the UK's 12 regional electricity companies taken over by US utilities. An eighth, Eastern, is the subject of an agreed £4.06bn bid by the Oregon-based PacifiCorp.

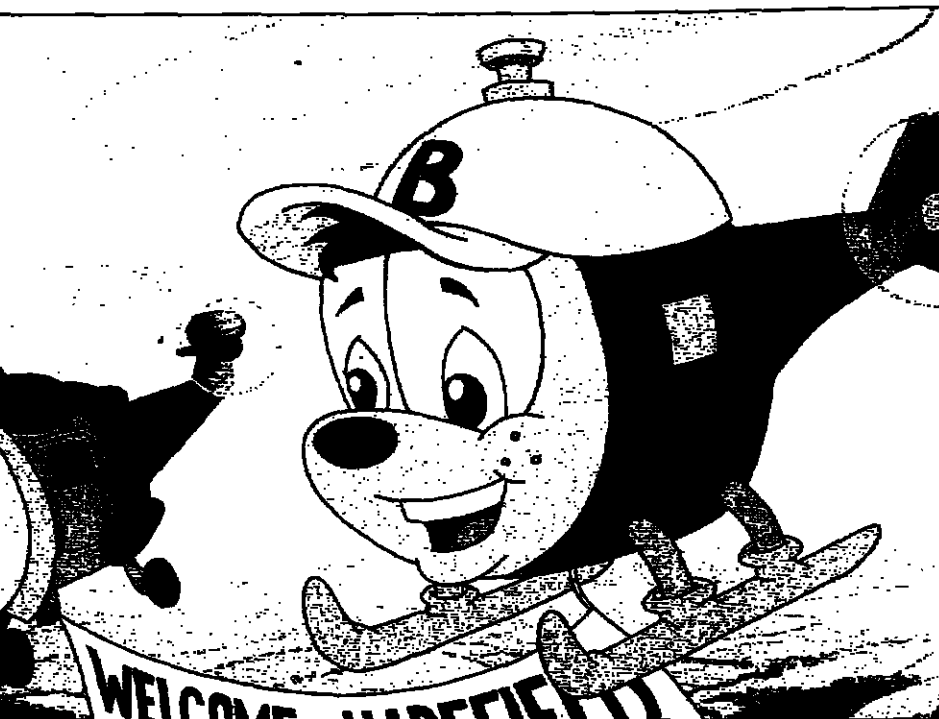
The solidarity pact, agreed at a meeting in Washington of union leaders from the two countries, is likely to see collective discussions at parent company level of issues affecting the entire workforce.

In particular, the British unions will advise their US counterparts on how to handle the liberalisation of the industry which is now spreading across the Atlantic and is likely to involve similar job cuts to those witnessed here following electricity privatisation.

Meanwhile, the US unions will provide advice to UK unions on the employment records and policies of the US parent companies. Kenneth Zinn, North American co-ordinator of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Unions, said industrial action by workers in one country in support of those employed by the same company in another could not be ruled out.

He also indicated there would be close liaison over terms and conditions of employment.

"When we enter collective bargaining negotiations, it is useful to know what the position is with workers in other parts of the business."



Sleepy Kids, which markets Budge the Little Helicopter, the Duchess of York's cartoon character, admitted yesterday it had flown into financial trouble, writes Andrew Yates. Sleepy Kids said it would make a large loss in 1997 and would not be able to fund development of new characters. It is seeking funds from shareholders or new investors to cover the £3.3m it will cost to produce new projects. The Disguises and Ticking Funster. If it cannot raise any extra finance the group could be forced to sell off some characters. The shares, which have collapsed from 117p in 1994, slumped another 4.5p to a low of 7.5p yesterday. Budge sales dried up after it was dropped by ITV and Fox Children's Network in the US.

Trocadero may sue sports stars' restaurant chain

By Andrew Yates

A glittering array of sporting stars including Tiger Woods, the golfer, and Monica Seles and Andre Agassi, the tennis players, could be dragged into a multi-million pound legal battle, it emerged yesterday.

Trocadero, the British leisure group, has threatened to sue All Star Cafe, the restaurant chain run by Planet Hollywood and part-owned by the some of the biggest names in the sporting world.

It claims that All Star Cafe has reneged on an agreement to open a new restaurant at its flagship leisure complex in London's West End, which was due to be completed early this year.

It is now looking to pursue legal action against the restaurant chain in conjunction with Burford, the property group that used to own Trocadero.

All Star Cafe denied the claims, alleging the site was not ready when it wanted to start work on the new restaurant. It has already lined up an alternative site in London, which it plans to open this year.

Trocadero was planning to charge £1m a year rent to All Star Cafe, and stood to receive a payment of £14m from Burford if the deal was completed. Investment column, page 22

Liberty plunges by 20% after shock profits warning

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Shares in Liberty, the luxury department store, plunged more than 20 per cent yesterday after the group warned that profits this year would be "substantially lower" than market expectations and said it would not be paying a final dividend to shareholders.

The 122-year-old fashion retailer, whose Regent Street store is among London's most famous shopping sites, said sales in the year to 31 January had been affected by unseasonable weather and the strength of the pound, which cut tourist spending. The shares fell 70p on the news, to 250p.

Liberty added that increasing costs together with disappointing sales had resulted in poorer trading profits in each of the last six months than during the previous year. The decline in profits had worsened significantly in January.

The surprise warning follows a bitter, three-month long battle for control of the store. Elizabeth Stewart-Liberty, a family member and shareholder, requisitioned an extraordinary shareholders meeting in an attempt to oust the chairman Denis Cassidy and appoint Bri-

an Myerson and Odile Griffith, financial adviser to the Stewart-Liberty family, to the board.

Mr Cassidy was removed and its board of directors and advisors resigned. Liberty subsequently pulled out of talks with other bidders. The company last month named Philip Bowman as new chairman, and is searching for a managing director and finance director.

Liberty said it would halt all development work on its flagship store, although the financial burden resulting from work already completed would continue to hit earnings. A £43m plan to redesign the store was the focus of the boardroom coup.

"Unfortunately, very substantial expenditure has already been incurred and regardless of decisions ultimately taken by the board further significant costs are unavoidable given pre-existing commitments," the group added.

After a £16.6m loss in 1996, Liberty returned to profit in 1997. The group said its priority now is to strengthen the board by appointing further non-executive directors, a managing director and finance director, and completing "a rigorous evaluation of the company's strategic options".

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Da La Rue can hardly get worse

THERE IS a certain symmetry about Jeremy Marshall's tenure as chief executive of De La Rue. When he took charge of the presses at the banknote and cash handling group, the share price was about 300p. For the first five years of his tenure, De La Rue rode a booming market as the new democracies of eastern Europe printed new banknotes. At their peak, De La Rue shares hit 1050p, and Mr Marshall seized the opportunity to use that expensive paper to pay over the odds for Portals, the papermaker.

Though that deal eventually stacked up, De La Rue never really recovered. Increased competition in the traditionally cosy banknote market and an unfortunate habit of promising too much and delivering less meant that, in just three years, Mr Marshall signed his name to no less than four profit warnings and watched the share price slump back down to where it was when he started. Yesterday's warning, which dumped the shares down a quarter at 269p, proved too much and Mr Marshall "retires" two years ahead of schedule.

Replacing the man at the top is rarely the solution to the problem, even though chairman Brandon Gough, the Surrey-based Yorkshire Water chairman who is taking charge until a replacement is found, should be able to restore an element of credibility to De La Rue's dealings with the City. Yesterday, he made all the right noises about getting rid of non-core businesses, investing for expansion and improving efficiency. But the real question is whether De La Rue's margins have been sufficiently eroded that it is now in line with the rest of the industry.

Judging by yesterday's statement, it's hard to see how much worse it can get. Operating profits for the year to March will be £60.5m - down a third on last year. De La Rue blames the strong pound, the Asian crisis and an absence of one-off banknote printing contracts for the shortfall. Henderson Crosthwaite forecasts that pre-tax profits will be £90m this year, though they will fall to £72.5m in 1999 due to a fall in profits from 50 per cent owned printing machine group De La Rue Giori. After that, the introduction of the Euro will mean a huge demand boost for banknote printing and cash handling machines - but will that just prove another cyclical blip?

It's hard to see the share price slipping much further. Even taking the low point in 1999, the shares trade on a forward multiple of 11 and are currently valued at less than net assets. Even so, future disappointment cannot be ruled out. Only for the brave.

De La Rue: At a glance

Market value: £882m, share price 270p (-92.5p)

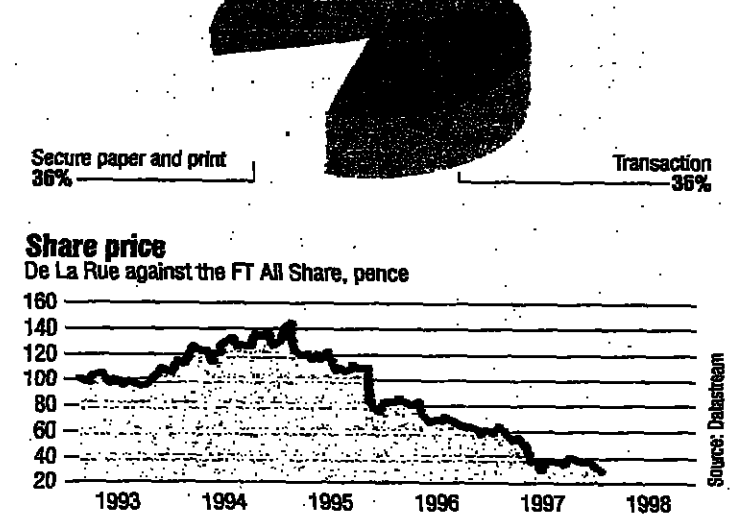
Five-year record	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998*
Turnover (£bn)	593	747	764	768	-
Pre-tax profits (£m)	130	147	148	106	90
Earnings per share (p)	49.9	55.1	50.5	35.0	29.9
Dividends per share (p)	20.0	22.5	22.5	24.0	22.0

* Henderson Crosthwaite forecast

Divisional breakdown

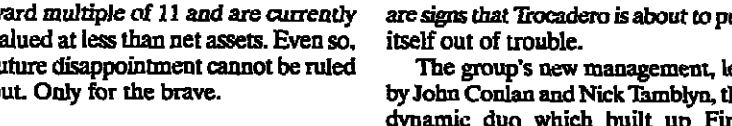
Cash systems

47%



Share price

De La Rue against the FT All Share, pence



Noddy could save Trocadero

CYNICAL observers suggest that Trocadero, the AIM-quoted stock which is looking for a new title, should be called "Troubled Troc", the name that seems to preface any article about the group.

Segaworld, the hi-tech amusement arcade that was meant to transform the giant leisure complex in London's West End, has flopped. Losses of £31.6m last year show just how badly things have gone wrong. But the figures contain a host of write-offs aimed at laying the ghost of the past, and there

are signs that Trocadero is about to pull itself out of trouble.

The group's new management, led by John Conlan and Nick Tamblin, the dynamic duo which built up First Leisure, have already started to reshape the business. Trocadero has managed to persuade its notoriously difficult Japanese partners to scrap entry fees. Next come new bars and restaurants to try and entice the millions that have traditionally hurried past the site. Segaworld will still struggle to break even this year but the reforms are working and, at the very least, the site should no longer act as a significant drain on earnings.

Segaworld's problems have also obscured the group's hidden gem. It owns the publishing and film rights to the Enid Blyton estate and has huge potential to exploit characters like Noddy and the Famous Five, a process that has only just begun.

Analysts forecast 1998 profits of £3m-£4m. But that figure is in itself

meaningless. At the moment Trocadero is effectively a cash shell. Most of its net assets of £70m, equivalent to 14p a share, are made up of money it has in the bank or due to receive from property sales. And that figure does not include the value of the Enid Blyton rights, which must be worth well in excess of the 4.75p a share that the current price of 18.75p implies. Throw in a recently acquired bar business, which has great promise, and the shares begin to look very cheap.

Brown & Jackson settles down

BROWN & Jackson's history has been such a disaster that investors must have wondered whether fortunes of the Poundstretcher discount stores group would ever take a turn for the good. But in the three years since Pepkor, the South African group, acquired a dominant stake it has started to look more stable.

With Pepkor now holding 70 per cent and one institution another 10 per cent, the stock is tightly held and the shares have quadrupled in the last year. They edged 3p higher to 47p yesterday on a sharp jump in half-year profits from £5.7m to £13.2m. The company is now forecast to make its first full-year profit since 1992.

Much of the credit here must go to Brown & Jackson's South African management team, whose shrewd approach is starting to pay off. At Poundstretcher, the main discount chain, like-for-like sales fell by 3.2 per cent, though this was expected after changes to the sales mix. The average selling price per item increased as did the average spend per customer, though management still plans to keep Poundstretcher at the "value" end of the market.

Poundstretcher's profits increased by 43.5 per cent in the period and the company's two acquisitions of last year, WEW and Your More Store, are only starting to contribute. The two discount chains made £5m in the three months in which they were part of the group.

No more acquisitions are expected, so the immediate future will see management continue to work at improving the performance of its existing portfolio. Peel Hunt is now forecasting full-year profits of £25m which puts the shares on a forward rating of 14. If management continues to deliver earnings growth that could look good value. But the company's volatile record urges caution. After a good run the shares are a hold.

Sharp drop in profits at Glaxo worries SmithKline investors

By Andrew Yates

GLAXO-WELLCOME, in the midst of negotiating a merger with SmithKline Beecham to create the largest drugs company in the world, yesterday disappointed the market with a 9 per cent fall in 1997 pre-tax profits to £2.68bn. Its shares slipped 21p to 145p.

A dramatic fall in sales of Zantac, its leading ulcer treatment, higher than expected costs of marketing its drugs in the US and the effect of the strong pound were to blame for the fall in profits.

Some analysts and institutions seized on the figures as pointing to the real reason why Glaxo is seeking a merger with SmithKline.

One industry analyst said: "It is easier to see now why Glaxo was so keen to step in and forge a deal with SmithKline instead of allowing it to team up with American Home Products."

"This deal is all about preventing earnings falling in years to come."

"Drugs companies will be forced to spend more on getting drugs and marketing them in the future," said one of Glaxo's institutional shareholders.

Several shareholders in SmithKline also raised concerns about Glaxo owning 59.5 per cent of the merged company given the fall in profits and concerns about its ability to replace Zantac. Glaxo refused to comment on whether it was renegotiating the terms of the deal.

Glaxo hired 700 more sales staff in the US and launched an advertising campaign to improve drug sales but that led to trading margins falling by more than two percentage points to 35.4 per cent. The drugs giant admitted that it would struggle to see 40 per cent-plus margins it enjoyed when Zantac sales were at their peak.

Sales of the ulcer drug, which has been the best selling drug of all time, fell by more than a fifth after it came off patent in the US last July. Since then, 10 competitors have entered the market, and sales are

due to drop 80 per cent by this summer.

Nevertheless, Sir Richard Sykes, the group's chairman, insisted the results were in line with forecasts. He said: "We have delivered on our promises and this is a robust performance."

Glaxo also signalled that thousands of workers at the two drugs groups face weeks of uncertainty before they learn their fate.

Unions are calling on Glaxo to talk about a cost-cutting programme that could lead to 10,000 job losses around the world. Sir Richard said yesterday: "We have nothing to say to anybody at this point." Details of the deal are due to be announced in early March.

Glaxo admitted it was still embroiled in a dispute with tax authorities about liabilities arising from the transfer of funds between different countries. Although it is moving close to an agreement in the UK, the case in the US could hang over the merged group.

New customers boost Provident Financial results

By Andrew Verity

PROVIDENT Financial, the door-to-door lender and insurer, yesterday posted a 15 per cent profit rise following a jump of 7 per cent in the number of new customers.

The company charges £59 for every £100 it lends in exchange for flexible repayments that can be reduced or put off. It now serves 1.4 million customers, 80 per cent of whom live on council estates and take out loans worth less than £200.

The group said business had boomed after it stepped up the number of agents by 388 to 10,260.

The company also reported its insurance wing had become more profitable after it stepped back from the cut-throat motor insurance market.

Howard Bell, chief executive, said: "We've taken a totally different strategy to the rest of the insurance industry in that we are pricing for margin, not volume." The number of customers dropped by 118,000 to 477,000 during the year, but profits rose by 30 per cent to £13.7m.

Mr Bell said volumes were now coming back because rival insurers could no longer sustain such slim margins.

The home service market, under which payments are col-

lected by a weekly visit from an agent, has seen Prudential abandon the market on grounds of cost. Other players, such as London & Manchester and Pearl Assurance, have scaled back their operations.

Shares in the group closed up 13p at 918p after the company said it would spend £94m on a return of capital to shareholders. Last May, the shares stood at just 585p.

The company promised in May to buy back 17 million shares. It was then forced to stop the programme when the shares shot up in price. Instead, it will pay a dividend of 35p per share.

Singer out of race for Guinness Mahon

By Lea Paterson

SINGER & Friedlander, the UK investment bank, has pulled out of the race to buy Guinness Mahon, the investment bank put up for sale by the Bank of Yokohama, its Japanese parent, last month.

Singer & Friedlander had been tipped as a leading contender for Guinness Mahon, one of the oldest names in British investment banking.

Yesterday it appeared that Guinness Mahon - which has had a presence in London since the 1870s - would remain under foreign ownership. A leading South African bank, possibly Investec or Nedcor, is rumoured to be the prime contender.

Sources close to the talks said that further bidders could still emerge as Guinness Mahon has yet to complete a series of roadshows to potential buyers. The Guinness Mahon group is unlikely to be broken up prior to the sale, the sources added.

At the time of the sale announcement, Guinness Mahon

executives expressed a desire to keep the group together.

As well as the Guinness Mahon investment bank, the Guinness Mahon group owns Henderson Crosthwaite, the City broker, and 44 per cent of Guinness Flight Hambro Asset Management, a joint venture with Hambros, a rival bank.

The Guinness Mahon sale process could be wrapped up in less than four weeks, sources said yesterday, and the banking group is expected to fetch between £75m and £100m.

Guinness Mahon was put up for sale after the Bank of Yokohama (BoY), which took control of the UK bank in 1991, decided to focus on its domestic business after a strategic review.

BoY is said to have injected more than £200m into Guinness Mahon after the bank ran into difficulties in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. But a combination of the BoY funds and the stewardship of David Potter, the bank's chief executive, managed to restore the financial health of the bank.

Fund managers to be barred from chairing client trusts

By Andrew Verity

FUND MANAGERS will be blocked from chairing the boards of client investment trusts, in a big reform of corporate governance being pushed through by the industry's trade body.

The Association of Investment Trust Companies yesterday said new guidance meant trusts' boards would be supervised by an independent chairman.

Until now, the AITC has only insisted that a majority of the directors of an investment trust company are independent. The chairman, who plays a key role in deciding who to pick as a fund manager, will now have to be completely independent of that fund manager.

Michael Hart, the chairman of the AITC, said: "I think the in-

dustry accepts that is not suitable for the chairman to be connected to the investment manager."

Investment trusts had come under sharp criticism from the City for allowing employees of the trust to sit on the board.

Foreign & Colonial this week said none of its fund managers would be allowed to sit on investment trust boards. The move followed the ousting of the board of the Brazilian Smaller Companies Investment Trust. Mr Hart had been chairman of the trust at the same time as he was chairman of the fund manager, Foreign & Colonial.

Henderson Investors, the biggest investment trust manager, still has employees on the boards of some trusts, as do Fleming, Edinburgh Fund Managers, Baillie Gifford and Investec.

Regulator wants tougher rules on multi-utilities

IAN BYATT, the water industry regulator, has called for tougher rules over multi-utility companies to protect customers. He told industry executives that water companies which were incorporated into bigger multi-utility empires should maintain separate boards which included executive and non-executive directors. Mr Byatt said prices paid by regulated water operations to other businesses within these larger groups should be based on market rates. Customer committees in the water industry should also work more closely with those in other utility sectors such as electricity.

US trade deficit grows

THE US trade deficit rose last year to its highest level in nine years after a surprisingly large 24.3 per cent increase in December to \$10.79bn (£6.58bn). Wall Street economists had expected December's deficit to be only \$8.7bn and news of the larger-than-expected shortfall put pressure on the dollar as dealers saw even bigger trade gaps this year due to Asia's economic crisis.

Homes selling quickly

THE HOUSING market is going from strength to strength, with homes taking an average of just 11 weeks to sell, according to a survey by Black Horse Agencies. Almost half the properties put on the market are sold in six weeks or less with one in 10 selling in the first seven days, the report revealed. It said sales were at the fastest rate since the group first produced its home report in August 1995, with the average time three weeks shorter than a year ago. The fastest location for sales is in south-east England at seven weeks, while north west England is the slowest at 17 weeks.

Six-day German banking

A GERMAN court has ruled that Deutsche Bank can continue to open some branches on Saturdays in a decision that could prove a first step toward relaxing the regulations governing German banking hours. The ruling by a Cologne employment court will allow Germany's largest bank to serve customers six days a week at six branches it operates in large supermarkets. Deutsche said it will push forward with plans to open more of the so-called "banking shops" in the coming months.

Siebe buys smoke alarm firm

SIEBE, the diversified engineering group, has bought Coleman Safety & Security Products, a subsidiary of Coleman Co, for \$64m in cash. The unit makes smoke alarms, thermostats and carbon monoxide detectors. Siebe said it would license the Coleman name for certain products sold through retail distribution. The sale which is subject to regulatory approval, is expected to close by the end of March.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
B&A (F)	8.54m (7.44m)	596.0m (456.0m)	22.3p (17.1p)	18.5p (15.8p)
Bellwinch (F)	14.91m (13.11m)	0.712m (0.502m)	1.5p (1.1p)	nil (nil)
Brown & Jackson (F)	154.7m (111.4m)	13.25m (8.74m)	8.5p (4.6p)	nil
Cord Clear (F)	7.15m (5.75m)	2.01m (1.08m)	1.95p (1.23p)	0.25p
Glaxo Wellcome (F)	7.98bn (5.34bn)	2.85bn (2.65bn)	82.0p (56.7p)	135.0p (124.0p)
Provident Financial (F)	444.2m (429.7m)	138.5m (118.5m)	34.8p (29.3p)	18.5p (16.5p)
Trocadero (F)	5.40m (2.08m)	-31.84m (1.22m)	6.17p (0.15p)	nil

(F) = Full (F) = Interim *Pre-tax profit is pre-exceptionals **EPS is including exceptional 1000000 to be paid as foreign income dividend

£10 Conran lunch

The Independent and Independent on Sunday in association with Terence Conran are delighted to offer readers the opportunity to enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants throughout February for £10

Until Saturday February 28th, the following establishments are offering readers a two course lunch or early evening supper for just £10 per person.

How to Book

To participate in the offer simply collect one token (tokens will be printed every day until Saturday February 28th) and then telephone the restaurant of your choice quoting yourself as an Independent diner. On your arrival at the restaurant you should present your token in order to qualify for the offer. Each token is valid for a complete table booking. The tokens will be valid for one week only, and will be dated accordingly. To continue to participate in the offer, simply collect a token from the week in which you wish to dine. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

A special discount is available on selected items in the Bluebird and Le Pont de la Tour shops on presentation of the token.



MOZZO

QUAGLINO'S

ZINC BAR & GRILL



Blue Print Café

The Independent offer is available at the following restaurants:

Bluebird 350 King's Road, London, SW3 5UJ

0171 359 1000

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Blue Print Café The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London, SE1

2YE

0171 378 7031

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm*

Le Pont de la Tour Bar & Grill 36d Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE

0171 403 8403

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Mezzo 100 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3LE

0171 314 4000

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

closed Saturday lunchtime, open Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Quaglinos 16 Bury Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6AL

0171 930 6767

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Zinc Bar & Grill 21 Heddon Street, London, W1R 7LF

0171 255 8899

The special 3 course menu is available between 12noon and 7pm

between Monday and Wednesday the offer is extended until 11pm*

The offer is available 7 days a week at all six restaurants

* Closed from 6pm on Sunday Offer not available after 6pm on February 14

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT

Valid between Saturday February 14th and Friday February 20th

Name

Address

This voucher entitles the holder and all members of their booking to participate in The Independent/Conran Restaurants £10 lunch offer

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Diageo hits peak amid talk of sale by Arnault

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Bernard Arnault, the combative French tycoon, is said to have lost his taste for Diageo, the £24bn drinks giant created by the merger of Grand Metropolitan and Guinness.

As Diageo shares rose 24.5p to a 615p peak, rumours swirled that Mr Arnault had unloaded part of his 11 per cent stake.

His LVMH luxury goods group is thought to be short of cash. The realisation of all, or at least part, of his interest could be a solution to any financial problems.

Stockbroker Greig Middleton has drawn attention to the Arnault discomfort. Its analysts, Tony Cooper and Martin Hawkins, have suggested LVMH could be a casualty of the Asian crisis and must also be feeling the impact of the "extravagant" acquisition of a duty-free group which, "coupled with Arnault's expensive share buying antics to try and influence

the course of the Diageo merger must now constitute a threat to his strategy and very survival".

They say the sale of the LVMH stake looks likely "as the financing pressures mount". The LVMH overhang is regarded as a drag on the Diageo price.

Yesterday's rumours suggested Mr Arnault, who strongly opposed the creation of Diageo, had started the unscrambling process in Paris. It was unclear whether he had actually placed shares. One story was that he had sold warrants on the shares.

The 11 per cent stake would command a value of around £2.5bn. With fund managers short of quality shares it would not be too difficult a placing. However, if the present rumours are correct it seems Mr Arnault has decided to whittle away his stake.

The Arnault companies this week drew attention to

their Diageo involvement, which is spread over seven companies as well as Mr Arnault and his family.

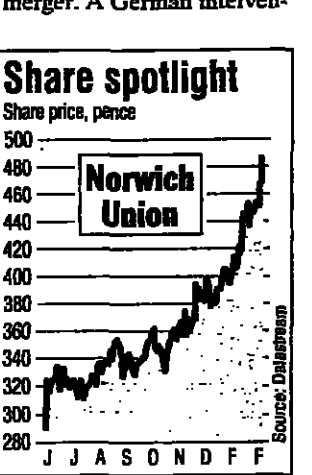
Blue chips' record-breaking run came to a gentle end with Footsie, after reaching a trading peak, ending 4.9 points lower at 5,718.5. Nags fears of higher interest rates and an unsettled New York overshadowed yet another round of takeover speculation.

Norwich Union was high on the bid strike list. The shares climbed 18p to a 487p closing peak after touching 500p. The progress underlined the suspicion that insurers will be at the forefront of the round of money mergers the stock market is so confidently predicting.

Royal & Sun Alliance rose 15p to 755p and even the seemingly bid-proof Sun Life & Provincial, where French interests have control, jumped 25.75p to 580.75p.

Some other recent high-flyers paused for breath.

Somerfield duly rolled out its bid for Kwik Save and immediately provoked stories of counter-bids. In busy trading Somerfield jumped 38p to 299p and Kwik Save put on 44.5p to 343.5p - not bad for two groups which claimed to be involved in a "all premium" merger. A German interven-



tion was the favourite option. Asda, at one time seemingly keen on Somerfield, is now thought to be renewing its interest in struggling Safeway, expected to produce another profits warning next week. As Safeway fell 11.5p to 360.5p, Asda rose 2.5p to 199p.

Wm Morrison, the supermarket chain, gave up 17.5p to 249p after cautious comments from Credit Lyonnais Laing. BT, at one time up 14p at 614p, ended 4p off at 596p. At its best the shares had added 24p following the investment dinner arranged by Henderson Crosthwaite. Jarvis, the rail maintenance group, continued to respond to presentations in Scotland, gaining a further 20.5p to 549.5p.

British Aerospace, on its figures, ended 18p higher at 1,849p. Glaxo Wellcome responded to its results with a 21p fall to 1,924p.

De La Rue, the security printer, crashed 92.5p (after

129p) to 270p following a fourth profit warning. The shares were more than 1,000 three years ago.

Other profit warnings taking their toll included Liberty, the stores group noted for an acrimonious confrontation when family influences ousted the executive directors, which slumped 70p to 250p, and ABI Leisure, once riding at 124p, off 4.5p to 115.5p. Sleepy Kids, the character merchandiser, dropped 4.5p to 7.5p after warning of a loss and letting it be known it needs more cash.

How, an engineer, hardened 24p to 100.5p, on a bid approach; British Dredging, where takeover action loomed, edged ahead 5p to 168.5p. Biggest shareholder and suspected bidder is Grafton, a Dublin-based builders merchant. It has nearly 30 per cent. RMC has 8.9 per cent and could exercise a right to buy 50 per cent in a joint venture it runs with Dredging.

TAKING STOCK

Action at Metrodome which has fallen from 25p to 11p. John Hall has moved in as chairman and Howard Mitchell is the new finance director. Mr Hall has made it known he wants to take Metrodome, largely a film group, into music publishing, home videos, record distribution and marketing. The rework includes the appointment of Butterfield as stockbrokers and a couple of acquisitions.

Fibernet, the blue-sky digital network group, raised £3m, placing shares through stockbroker Greig Middleton with institutions. The shares rose 7.5p to 192.5p. In January NetWest Securities suggested Fibernet could produce profits of £17m next year.

Ahead of today's shareholders' meeting Greenalls edged forward 3.5p to 414p. Stockbroker Panmure Gordon has a 480p target for the hotels and pubs chain which, in some quarters, is seen as a takeover candidate.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest available dividend divided by the share price. The FTSE 100 index is the average of the prices of the 100 largest companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. For help with the service, including the Portfolio facility, call the Help Desk on 071-729-0288 (during business hours).

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FTSE 100 index hour by hour

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Sharpical may miss Champion

Racing

By John Cobb

THOSE punters who were quick off the mark to back Sharpical, last Saturday's Tote Gold Trophy winner, for the Champion Hurdle may have cause to rue their alacrity. The six-year-old has had a setback that has put his Festival attempt in jeopardy.

Sharpical stands as low as 14-1 for the Champion with the Tote (25-1 with William Hill) after displaying a fine burst of speed to beat Kerami in the Newbury race on Saturday. In a year in which only Dato Star and Istabraq have won recognised Champion trials with authority, Sharpical looked a tempting alternative to at least reach a place at Cheltenham.

His trainer, Nick Henderson, said last night: "Sharpical is never a horse who comes back from his races well. I'm going

home to see him with my vet. That is all I can say at present. I will tell you more tomorrow."

Also under the weather is Kamikaze, who had been second favourite for tomorrow's Eider Chase at Newcastle. He has been forced to miss the race due to a poor blood count. "It's disappointing because he has been unlucky," his trainer, Kim Bailey, said, referring with some understatement to the grey's defeat at Uttoxeter last time when he unseated his rider two fences out with the race at his mercy.

In Kamikaze's absence the Eider favourite, Linden's Lot, has been shortened to 4-1.

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In Kamikaze's absence the Eider favourite, Linden's Lot, has been shortened to 4-1.

Dawsons warned off for 10 years over Classic Gold venture

THE owners Ron and Tim Dawson were yesterday warned off for 10 years by the Jockey Club. The father and son were found guilty of a string of offences by the Club's Disciplinary

Committee relating to their racehorse investment venture scheme Classic Gold.

The Dawsons were described as "showing a blatant disregard for investors in Clas-

sic Gold," and damaging "the good name of racing" and were adjudged to have "deliberately attempted to mislead" the Jockey Club.

The trainer Ian Campbell,

who houses five horses named in the Jockey Club inquiry at the Newmarket Stables owned by the Dawsons, was fined £750 after admitting being in breach of rules relating to making entries

Barrow back in Trophy business

Non-League football

By Rupert Metcalf

With only one - Cheltenham Town - of the top five in the GM Vauxhall Conference having reached the last 16 of the FA Umbro Trophy, there is a good chance that a club from outside the top flight of the non-League game can emulate Dagenham & Redbridge last season and reach the final.

Eight non-Conference sides are involved in tomorrow's third-round ties and the team with perhaps the best chance of going all the way to Wembley are Barrow. The 1990 Trophy winners, who are 10 points clear at the top of the UniBond League, have a home tie against Northwich Victoria. The Cumbrians have recently strengthened their squad by signing Mike Marsh, the former Liverpool and West Ham midfielder, from Southend United.

It is possible that all the quarter-finalists could come from the Conference, as none of the eight GMVC teams in the last 16 have been drawn together. Like Barrow, another club trying to prevent that happening are Grantham. The Dr Martens League Midlands Division leader, whose player-manager is the former Nottingham Forest midfielder Gary Mills, have a tough tie at home to Hedsorbe Town, however.

John King's Altrincham side, now in the UniBond League

after many years in the Conference, have an attractive home tie against Southport; while Jimmy Case's Bashley team take a break from chasing promotion from the Dr Martens Southern Division by travelling to Hayes.

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Wright to receive special treatment

Rugby League

By Dave Hadfield

WIGAN'S forgotten man, Nigel Wright, has been given a month to prove that he can get himself into shape for Super League.

The gifted stand-off has been plagued by injury since joining the club and started only eight matches last year. Now his coach, John Monie, has decided on a new make-or-break regime of recuperative treatment to try to overcome his latest problem, a stubborn ankle injury.

Monie has put his fitness specialist, Marty Hulme, in charge of trying to salvage Wright's career. If he fails, Wigan may be prepared to cut their losses on the former Wakefield Trinity player, who cost them £140,000 - a record fee for a teenager - in 1993.

The newly reunited National Rugby League in Australia has put off the evil day when it will reduce its 20 clubs to 14.

The competition was scheduled to start pruning after this season, but will now wait until after the 1999 season before any decisions are made.

That means a stay of execution for famous names like Barmine and South Sydney, who were threatened with extinction or merger. It will also delay an expected influx of displaced players into the British game.

April defence in Manchester next step for Hamed

Boxing

NASEEM HAMED will make the next defence of his world title at Manchester's Nynex Arena on 18 April.

Hamed, who successfully defended his World Boxing Organisation featherweight crown against Kevin Kelley in New York before Christmas, looks set for a busy schedule in the United States. But this time, Hamed, who has recently married, wanted to exchange a few home comforts for a place on the American fight scene. His promoter, Frank Warren, agreed to his wish and is likely to announce an opponent for Hamed next week.

"I wanted the fight to be in England. I like it, I'm comfortable," said Hamed before preparing for the 10th defence of his title. "And I'll be comfortable in Manchester, ready to knock somebody out and hopefully fighting for another belt."

The fight will go on at 11.30 (BST) in the evening to fit in with the schedules of Hamed's American cable network paymasters, Home Box Office.

Also on the bill will be the World Boxing Council champion, Luis Espinosa, defending his title against an Englishman, Warren, who now promotes Espinosa, would not be more specific, but it seems likely that all this is leading up to a unification match between Hamed and Espinosa some time this year.

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Slough close on sixth title

Hockey

By Bill Cowhill

A WIN for Slough tomorrow at home to Doncaster will assure the reigning champions of their sixth National League title in nine seasons and will send them to Russellheim next week for the European indoor finals in good heart.

Second-placed Ipswich welcome the return of Debbie Rawlinson and Sarah Bamfield for their game against Olton, who beat them 2-0 when the teams met at the beginning of the season. Ipswich await fitness reports on Kirsten Spencer and Tracy Fry.

At the bottom, Trojans are

unlikely to get much from the visit of Clifton Scottish Life. With the proposal to expand the league to 10 teams - advocated by the director of performance, Chris Spice - now unlikely to become effective before the 1999/2000 season, the relegation battle will intensify.

In the men's European Indoor Championship in Hamburg, St Albans will this afternoon face the host club, Harvested, in a baptism of fire and this evening the Poles, MZCS Poznan, without the services of the influential Ian Jennings. Jennings has decided that his outdoor club, Guildford, and their movement away from the Premier relegation zone, must be his priority.

Today's fixtures

Football
7.30 unless stated:
LEAGUE OF WALES: Carmarthen Town v Aberystwyth.
HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: Drogheda United v St Patrick's Athletic (745); Shamrock Rovers v Sligo Rovers (745).

Cricket
SECOND A ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL: Malawi v Sri Lanka A v England A (Adams).

Rugby Union
A INTERNATIONAL: England v Wales A (230) (at Leicester); Scotland v France (240) (at Gloucester).

Other sports
ATHLETICS: AAA England Under-20 Indoor Championships (at Birmingham).
SNOOKERS: Scottish Open (at Aberdeen).

Sandown

1.45 Mountain Storm
2.20 Stormy Passage
2.50 Upgrade
3.25 Inchoiloch

GOING: Chase course - Good to Firm; Hurdle course - Good (Good to Firm in places).
①Course is an A307, 4 miles long, 10 furlongs. Fairer station (service from London, via London Road, Park St, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 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Learning curve becomes harder for Henman

TIM HENMAN has taken one match at a time in his last four tournaments, having failed to advance to a second match. The identity of the British No 2's next opponent will be revealed shortly after 5 pm today, unless the promoters decide that a masked man would be appropriate, when Alan Mills, the Wimbledon referee, supervises the draw for next week's Guardian Direct Cup, an ATP Tour event to be staged in a temporary arena in Battersea Park.

It will be Henman's first competitive appearance in his home country since November, when he won the National Cham-

ionship at Telford for a third consecutive year. At Wimbledon in July, Henman reached his second successive quarter-final, only to be given a lesson by 1991 champion Michael Stich, who was in the process of marking his retirement.

After Battersea, Henman's next important British engagement is with Greg Rusedski for the Davis Cup tie against Ukraine at Newcastle from 3 to 5 April. The winners advance to the qualifying round for a place in the 16-strong World Cup on 25 to 27 September.

Having finished 1997 in possession of two ATP Tour singles

titles and a world ranking of No 17, Henman made an encouraging start to the year with a victory against Australia's Pat Rafter, the United States Open champion and world No 2, in advancing to the Sydney final in defence of his inaugural title.

Losing in the Sydney final against the talented Karol Kucera, of Slovakia, was disappointing but bearable. Since then, however, Henman appears to have become the Robbie Fowler of tennis.

Shaken by a first-round defeat at the Australian Open by Jerome Golmard, a French qualifier, the 23-year-old Henman has experienced a frustrating odyssey in search of form, losing successive opening round matches against Germany's Rainer Schüttler, in Croatia, the semi-retired Boris Becker, in Dubai, and Sweden's Magnus Norman in Antwerp, where Henman was a finalist last year.

The loss of points in Belgium will cost him a place in the top 20. Recalling the "What's wrong with British tennis?" era, when home players rarely even qualified for mainstream tour events, it is mildly amusing to sense the media's growing exasperation with Henman and his coach, David Felgate. Valid or not, the criticism is a measure of the increased expectation in the British game in the three years since Rusedski arrived from Canada and Henman began to confirm his potential.

Henman's profile has become too high for him to expect breathing space, but at least the drain on his ranking points is about to cease for a couple of months, the period he was missing from the tour last year following surgery to an elbow.

The draining of his confidence is another matter. Lapses in concentration, particularly during service games, caused the worrying run of results and, to state the obvious, his faith in his game will only be restored by a sequence of victories.

For this to happen, dedicated training and attention to strategy on the practice court has to be translated into action

under pressure during matches, whether or not the opponent's rank and reputation enhances motivation.

After his defeat by Becker, Henman expressed the view that a player probably loses more from losing matches than by winning them, and added: "I'll keep learning, not just this week, but for a hell of a lot of years to come."

Coaching is not an exact science, as Felgate himself has pointed out. The LTA's former manager of men's international training has a close association with Henman, bordering on that of an older brother. He is



Henman: Four fast failures

both coach and confidant. Moreover, his wife, Jan, is Henman's agent on behalf of Mark McCormack's International Management Group.

Those who would seek to part Henman and Felgate might possibly underestimate the strength of the bond between them.

Tomba joins rush to laud Maier's show

Winter Olympics

Mike Rowbottom
reports from Shigan Kogen

AS Alberto Tomba, double Olympic gold medalist in the giant slalom, slid out of contention on his backside early in yesterday's first run of the giant slalom, it felt like the end of an era.

"I flew like Maier," said Tomba, referring to the spectacular fall which the man who has replaced him as the highest profile Alpine skier, Hermann Maier, had suffered during the downhill event 11 days earlier.

But the truth was that the 31-year-old Italian was not able to match the young Austrian, even in terms of falling. While Maier's death-defying tumble was sufficient to require his mother to be sedated, Tomba's was a simple slide out of contention.

The 26-year-old Austrian earned his second gold of the Games as he finished nearly half a second clear of his nearest challenger, the fellow Austrian Stefan Eberharter.

For Maier, these Games are over. He will holiday for five days on the island of Guam before continuing with the World Cup season in which he is virtually certain to end up as overall champion.

For Tomba, there is only the consideration of how to play out the end of an illustrious career. Assuming he recovers from the bruising to his lower back which he suffered in his fall, he plans to bring an end to an Olympic career which began at the 1988 Games with an appearance in tomorrow's slalom event.

Tomba's reputation as a playboy precedes him, and when he arrived in Nagano last week he was full of his life - "I think I see her here," he said, peering into the amphitheatre full of journalists.

"Your style changes as you get older," he said. "When I was younger I skied a lot faster. I was much more reckless. Nowadays I am making plans for my future after skiing. I hope my future will always be in the sport."

There are hints of offers to

pursue a film career. There are rumours of tax problems. Nothing is certain - other than the fact that Tomba, who plans to carry on competing until next year's World Championships in Vail, realises that the future, in the shape of Hermann Maier, has arrived.

After finishing 2.44sec behind the Austrian in a race at Saalbach earlier this year, Tomba spoke in approving fashion of his young rival.

"He reminds me of myself 10 years ago," Tomba said. "He skis aggressively, and he has a strong, independent mind." Yesterday Maier's girlfriend, Petra Wechselberger, described the single-minded way in which Maier has devoted himself to training in the last two years.

Even though his startling performances have meant he has been welcomed back into the Austrian team programme, from which he was dropped as a relatively puny 15-year-old, Maier has spent many hours training on his own, riding an exercise bicycle, working weights, and skiing every day.

Now that he is established as a world star, his earning capacity has been increased through the fact that, unlike most of the Austrians, he can speak English - a product of his years spent working as a ski instructor on the slopes of his native Flachau.

These have been Maier's

Games. After the traumatic fall in the opening weekend's downhill, the predictions made for him have been fulfilled. As he moved gently down the line of television interviews at the finishing area yesterday, tossing his lion-like mane of hair, this was an athlete who had well and truly arrived.

Britain's short-track speed skaters, in contrast, were ath-

letes who had well and truly departed after last night's action, when Nicky Gooch, bronze medalist in the Olympic 500 metres four years ago, was knocked out in the opening heat of this year's event, soon to be joined by the other individual choice, Matt Jasper.

To complete Britain's disappointing night, the relay team were knocked out of the 5,000 metres semi-final, finishing half a lap behind Canada and China.

Jasper, handicapped by a stumble at the start, managed to recover to third in his heat - one place below what was required, although he was later disqualified.

But for Gooch, who had a disastrous World Championships in the same White Ring arena last year, these Games - for which his preparations have been disrupted by a chest infection - have been the stuff of nightmares. His fortunes last night, when he slid out of contention after moving up into the second qualifying place in his heat, said everything about these Olympics as far as he was concerned.

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Show of force: Hermann Maier on his way to victory in the giant slalom yesterday

Photograph: AFP

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Nagano results and timetable

ALPINE SKIING

Men's giant slalom
1 Hermann Maier (AUT) 2min 59.51sec
2 Stefan Eberharter (AUT) 2:59.36
3 Michael von Sarnow (GER) 3:00.00
4 H. Kraus (AUT) 3:00.71; 5 J. Kral (SLO) 3:00.98; 6 S. Luderer (SWE) 3:01.30; 7 P. Accola (SWE) 3:01.67; 8 L. Kier (CAN) 3:02.02; 9 C. Mayer (AUT) 3:02.07; 10 F. Nyberg (SWE) 3:02.40; 11 B. Reuter (SWE) 3:02.48

Women's slalom
1 Hilde Gerg (GER) 1min 32.04sec
2 Deborah Compagnoni (ITA) 1:32.46
3 Zsolt Szegedi (HUN) 1:32.87
4 M. End (GER) 1:33.21; 5 S. Fager (SWE) 1:33.22; 6 S. Salvi (SLO) 1:33.38; 7 M. Accola (SWE) 1:33.42; 8 M. Galtsova (RUS) 1:33.57; 9 M. Bergman (SWE) 1:34.09; 10 A. Onneson (SWE) 1:34.24; 11 E. Camillo (CAN) did not finish

Women's 4x1km relay (mixed teams in brackets)
1 Germany 1hr 40min 11.25sec
2 Canada 1hr 40min 11.25sec
3 Austria 1hr 40min 11.25sec
4 Russia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
5 Norway 1hr 40min 11.25sec
6 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
7 Czech Republic 1hr 40min 11.25sec
8 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec
9 Switzerland 1hr 40min 11.25sec
10 Slovakia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
11 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
12 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec

Women's 4x1km relay (mixed teams in brackets)
1 Germany 1hr 40min 11.25sec
2 Canada 1hr 40min 11.25sec
3 Austria 1hr 40min 11.25sec
4 Russia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
5 Norway 1hr 40min 11.25sec
6 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
7 Czech Republic 1hr 40min 11.25sec
8 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec
9 Switzerland 1hr 40min 11.25sec
10 Slovakia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
11 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
12 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec

Women's 4x1km relay (mixed teams in brackets)
1 Germany 1hr 40min 11.25sec
2 Canada 1hr 40min 11.25sec
3 Austria 1hr 40min 11.25sec
4 Russia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
5 Norway 1hr 40min 11.25sec
6 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
7 Czech Republic 1hr 40min 11.25sec
8 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec
9 Switzerland 1hr 40min 11.25sec
10 Slovakia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
11 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
12 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec

Women's 4x1km relay (mixed teams in brackets)
1 Germany 1hr 40min 11.25sec
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4 Russia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
5 Norway 1hr 40min 11.25sec
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8 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec
9 Switzerland 1hr 40min 11.25sec
10 Slovakia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
11 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
12 Sweden 1hr 40min 11.25sec

Women's 4x1km relay (mixed teams in brackets)
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3 Austria 1hr 40min 11.25sec
4 Russia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
5 Norway 1hr 40min 11.25sec
6 Slovenia 1hr 40min 11.25sec
7

